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Ideas on Liberty

NOVEMBER 1973

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VOL. 23, NO. 11 • NOVEMBER 1973

Political Corruption — Allan C. Brownfeld — 643
One result of all-powerful government and centralized power.

Health Care, Human Rights and Government Intervention — Garvan F. Kuskey, DDS — 648
A critical appraisal of the efforts to nationalize medical and dental services.

Let Education Go Commercial — Thomas L. Johnson — 655
Exploring the market possibilities of resolving some of the problems of schools.

Welfare as a Right — Ridgway K. Foley, Jr. — 663
If it is a right, rather than a privilege, someone must be bound to deliver.

Dear America: — Howard D. Aley — 672
An open letter from a young American.

How to Stop Inflation — Leonard E. Read — 674
Take from government the power to create money and hand out special privileges.

The Right to Be Wrong — and the Obligation to Be Right — Charles R. LaDow — 680
To the right of free speech is forever attached the obligation to be right.

Freedom/Responsibility—the Quest for Individual Dignity — Robert G. Bearce — 685
Only through self-improvement may one proceed toward a better world.

The Cry for Freedom Is the Scream of Nature — Thomas F. O'Connell — 691
However frustrating the search for freedom, it must go on.

Book Reviews: — 699
"The Lady and the Tycoon: Letters Between Rose Wilder Lane and Jasper Crane" edited by Roger Lea MacBride
"The Political Illusion" by Jacques Ellul

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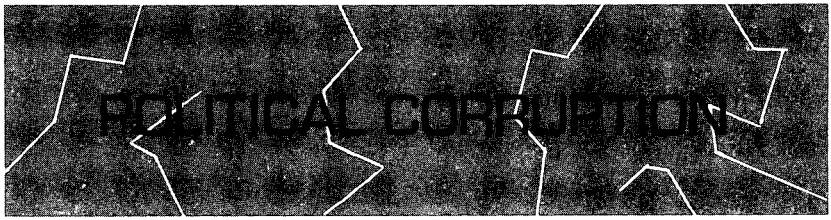

One Result of All-Powerful Government and Centralized Power

ALLAN C. BROWNFELD

PEOPLE throughout the country are asking themselves the question: "Why are so many men in so many high places in Washington involved in so much corruption?" They observe huge cash payments, unreported, being made to national political campaigns and wonder why so many businessmen feel the need to involve themselves in politics. Unfortunately, the answers we receive to such questions miss the point entirely. We are told, in response, that we need more honest men in government, or stricter laws, or more Congressional control.

It may be true that we need more honest men in Washington, for politics, as President Eisenhower once reflected, "is too important for the politicians." It may also be true that we need stricter laws and additional control by the Congress. But the simple reason why so many businessmen are involved in politics is that politics is so involved in business. If government did not have the power to set wages and prices, no one would feel the need to bribe anyone for a favorable ruling. If government did not have huge contracts to bestow in a multiplicity of fields, no one would need to pay off politicians for a piece of the action. If government did not provide itself with the power to regulate, in the name of "safety" or "ecology" or whatever, no one would feel the need to bribe anyone for or against a particular ruling.

It is inevitable, as government becomes more and more powerful and controls more and more aspects of our lives, that Americans will seek to influence that govern-

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ment through campaign contributions and other forms of reward. It is similarly inevitable that men in political life, with such enormous power at their disposal, will be tempted to accept such bribery. Changing the men and keeping the system as it is will change very little.

Earlier Scandals

The trend toward government control of the nation's economy goes back to the latter part of the nineteenth century. Discussing the age of the "Robber Barons," Gustavus Myers, in his book, *History Of The Great American Fortunes,* places great stress upon the low level of political morality which was evidenced in the rush to accommodate the highest bidder from the business community. Describing the situation in New York State, Myers charges that, "Laws were sold at Albany to the highest bidder."

In an article prompted by the Credit Mobilier scandal, E. L. Godkin, editor of the *Nation,* warned that the only lasting answer to bribery and corruption would be an end to the power of congressmen to bestow great privileges upon private individuals or corporations. Godkin wrote: "The remedy is simple. The Government must get out of the 'protective' business and the 'subsidy' business and the 'improvement' business and the 'development' business. It must let trade and commerce, and manufactures, and steamboats and railroads, and telegraphs alone. It cannot touch them without breeding corruption."

The Bewildered Society

Discussing the tendency at this time to look at the scandals of the past – and present – and conclude from them that what we need is more and not less governmental authority, George Roche III, in his volume, *The Bewildered Society,* notes that, "Advocates of centralized authority and economic control in the twentieth century look back to the so-called era of Reconstruction and big business to point out its evils with great glee and to suggest that those evils are a prima facie case for the necessity of more political control of business. The very reverse is actually the case . . . All of the significant scandals of the nineteenth century were closely connected with the exercise of political power."

Dr. Roche points out that, ". . . there evolved the dichotomy which saw businessmen preaching laissez faire doctrine for everyone else, while asking for government assistance in their own particular case."

The recent revelations with regard to the Nixon Administration

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– the Vesco funds, the contribution from the milk producers, the airlines, and so forth – are simply part of the ongoing reality of corruption in a society where government becomes the arbiter of all things. Similarly, the use of the Internal Revenue Service by those in power to punish opponents is only additional proof that those who argued that the power to tax is the power to destroy were quite right.

To Restore Integrity, Limit Government's Power

If Americans seek to restore honesty and integrity to government, the first step in the proper direction would be to begin divesting government of its power over the nation's economy, its schools, and its farms. A government which did not have favors to bestow would not be a recipient of secret cash contributions. Politicians, without life and death power to wield, could more easily maintain their honesty and integrity.

If the Watergate hearings have an additional long-range lesson for the American people, it may be the fact that the dire warnings over the years by distinguished statesmen and scholars about the danger of an all-powerful executive were quite correct.

In *The Federalist Papers*, James Madison declared that, "In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself."

During the years when, under the New Deal leadership of Franklin Roosevelt, the role of the executive was increasing in scope and was less and less subject to control by either the legislative or judicial branches of government, it was conservative Republicans such as Senator Robert Taft of Ohio who warned of the dangers of executive power.

Discussing the manner in which we went to war in Korea, without a Congressional declaration, Senator Taft stated that, "If in the great field of foreign policy the President has the arbitrary and unlimited powers he now claims, then there is an end to freedom in the United States not only in the foreign field but in the great realm of domestic activity which necessarily follows any foreign commitments."

During those years, it was the liberal Democrats who supported executive power, who opposed measures such as the Bricker Amendment which sought to limit it, and downgraded the role of the Congress.

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How Did It Happen?

Now, with Watergate and the spectacle of non-elected and ambitious men charged with illegal and unethical activities, many Americans wonder how it is that the executive branch came to possess so much power and to view itself as above and beyond the law. Ironically, the liberals, whose policies have led to this state of affairs, are most aghast; while many conservatives, who always recognized the danger of arbitrary executive power, now tend to apologize for it, for it is being wielded by their own party.

The noted historian, Daniel M. Boorstin, states that one of the most important lessons to be learned from Watergate relates to the growth of the government's executive branch:

"There are hundreds of people who write on White House stationery. This is a new phenomenon. In fact, it's a phenomenon which has astonished, and properly astonished, some senators who asked the counsellor to the President if he ever saw the President and he said he didn't. And I think there are something like 40 persons who bear some title such as counsellor to the President or assistant to the President or something of that sort. Now this is a relatively new phenomenon: the opportunity for the President to get out of touch with the people who speak in his name."

American political philosophy has always held that the legislative branch was to be the supreme branch of government. Philosopher John Locke, who profoundly affected the thinking of the Founding Fathers, is emphatic on the position of the legislative branch. In his *Second Treatise* he writes that, "There can be but one supreme power, which is the legislative, to which all the rest are and must be subordinate."

Departure from Tradition

Presidential dominance, which has been growing since the days of the New Deal, is inconsistent with the American political tradition. If men such as those involved in today's Watergate scandal, who are not elected by the people and cannot be voted out of office by the people, are unchecked in their exercise of power, the concept of representative and limited government is seriously challenged.

It is unfortunate that principle seems to play such an ambiguous role in American politics. The men who most feared executive power when the other party wielded it, are now becoming comfortable with it. Similarly, those who welcomed it when it was in their own hands, are now suspicious of it. This, of course, becomes argument

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from mere circumstance, and not from principle. The American people deserve something better from their elected officials.

If we learn from Watergate to be suspicious of centralized power, whether in the hands of Democrats or Republicans, we will have learned an important lesson. During the colonial period, the anti-Federalists, men such as George Mason and Patrick Henry, opposed the ratification of the Constitution because they believed that even that limited and limiting document provided for too strong an executive. "Did we fight King George III only to have an elected king?" they would ask. Their question still bears asking, for we in America do not want an elected king, but an executive to carry out the laws passed by the Congress.

Hopefully, Watergate will mark the end of the trend toward centralized power started in the New Deal. If it does, all of us will benefit.

IDEAS ON LIBERTY

No Change By Usurpation

IT IS important, likewise, that the habits of thinking in a free country should inspire caution in those intrusted with its administration to confine themselves within their respective constitutional spheres, avoiding in the exercise of the powers of one department to encroach upon another. The spirit of encroachment tends to consolidate the powers of all the departments in one, and thus to create, whatever the form of government, a real despotism. A just estimate of that love of power and proneness to abuse it which predominates in the human heart is sufficient to satisfy us of the truth of this position. The necessity of reciprocal checks in the exercise of political power, by dividing and distributing it into different depositories, and constituting each the guardian of the public weal against invasions by the others, has been evinced by experiments ancient and modern, some of them in our country and under our own eyes. To preserve them must be as necessary as to institute them. If in the opinion of the people the distribution or modification of the constitutional powers be in any particular wrong, let it be corrected by an amendment in the way which the Consititution designates. But let there be no change by usurpation: for though this in one instance may be the instrument of good, it is the customary weapon by which free governments are destroyed.

GEORGE WASHINGTON'S *Farewell Address*

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GARVAN F. KUSKEY, DDS

Health Care, Human Rights AND Government Intervention

SEVENTEEN YEARS ago the Austrian economist Ludwig von Mises observed that the people of the United States enjoyed the highest standard of living of any people in the world; but only because the United States government embarked much later than the governments in other parts of the world upon the policy of obstructing human enterprise and endeavor.[1] The dismal results of government intervention in the areas of agriculture, education, employment, housing, urban renewal, mail carriage, and transportation, to name but a few, are a matter of record.[2,3,4,5,6,7,8] Today it appears that the U.S. government is on the verge of a massive intervention into the practice of dentistry and medicine, because of an alleged "health crisis" in America. This impending action, which has the blessing of both political parties

Garvan F. Kuskey, DDS, has offices in Santa Barbara, California. His article is reprinted by permission from the *Journal of the California Dental Association*, July, 1973.

1 Ludwig von Mises, *The Anti-Capitalistic Mentality*, (New York, Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1956), p.v.

2 Clarence B. Carson, *The War on the Poor*, (New Rochelle, N. Y., Arlington House, 1969), pp. 13-24, 69-116, 128-129, pp. 186ff.

3 R. W. Grant, *The Case Against Public Education*, (Washington, D.C., *Free Campus News*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1969), p. 2.

4 Roger A. Freeman, *Dead End in American Education*, (*National Review*, Vol. XXI, No. 1), pp. 22-24.

5 See Henry Hazlitt, *Man vs. the Welfare State*, (New Rochelle, N. Y., Arlington House, 1969) for a comprehensive overview, in layman's language, of the entire gamut of destructive government intervention into the economy.

6 Martin Anderson, *The Federal Bulldozer*, (New York, McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1967), pp. 52-70, 229.

7 Murray N. Rothbard, *Power and Market: Government and the Economy*, (Menlo Park, California, Institute for Humane Studies, 1970), pp. 19-59.

8 William C. Wooldridge, *Uncle Sam, The Monopoly Man*, (New Rochelle, N. Y., Arlington House, 1970), pp. 11-31.

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as well as elements in the ADA and AMA, has been given the name "National Health Insurance," a political euphemism for socialized medicine.

When exposed to the ample body of evidence which documents the fact that no such crisis exists[9] supporters of government medicine generally point out that there are, nonetheless, still those who are not benefiting from our health care system. For example, in our own area of dentistry we are told by our liberal and conservative colleagues alike of the millions of cavities that are going unfilled in the mouths of the deprived and disadvantaged. The fact that there are also millions of unfilled cavities in the mouths of affluent suburbanites does not give them pause; we are still told that our free-enterprise system of health care, good as it is, must be changed, even drastically, in order that the medically indigent receive the care to which they are *entitled.* (For example, 95 per cent of all dentists examined in the oral health screening panel by Dr. Sherwin Z. Rosen at the October 1972 ADA convention in San Francisco had dental disease; 60 per cent had periodontitis. This unusually high incidence of pathology can hardly be attributed to lack of education or financial resources. What it does tend to confirm is that many Americans, rich and poor, educated and uneducated, *choose* to allocate their time and resources to activities other than achieving proper oral health. A government program of either treatment or education is unlikely to alter this situation. – JADA 86:743, April 1973).

Foreign Experience

At this point discussions of socialized medicine usually devolve into pragmatic considerations of whether or not this or that program of government health care will work. From the abundant evidence available which describes the experience in other countries which have adopted various plans of socialized medicine, it would appear that government medicine in any form is more costly than privately rendered care, is inefficient in its delivery, and often militates against the very persons it is designed to help.[10,11] We commit a serious error, however, if we focus all of our attention upon these pragmatic considerations without first determining whether or not it is possible for a person

9 Marvin H. Edwards, *Hazardous To Your Health; A New Look at the "Health Care Crisis" in America,* (New Rochelle, N. Y., Arlington House, 1972), pp. 37-128.

10 Edwards, *op. cit.*, pp. 135-230.

11 Neil McInnes: *Sweden's Bitter Pill,* (*Barron's,* 26 June 1972), p. 9.

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to actually possess a *right* to health care (or, as it is often more skillfully stated, a right to *access* to health care).

Before discussing health care "rights" it is necessary to first examine the philosophic underpinnings of the concept of *rights* itself. Exactly what constitutes a human right? Does a right come into existence because a legislature proclaims it? Can a president create human rights? Or a "majority"? To answer these questions we must begin our logical progression from the irrefutable premise that man *exists*. Since man exists as a living being, it can be apodictically stated that a human individual's most fundamental right is *the right to his own life*. From the time of the Greek philosophers to the present no one has stated this fact more concisely than the British political philosopher Auberon Herbert:

"The great natural fact of each person being born in possession of a separate mind and separate body implies ownership of such mind and body by each person, and rights of direction over such mind and body; it will be found on examination that no other deduction is reasonable." Elaborating on this point, Herbert devastates the argument that "society," the State, or anyone else has a valid claim on one's person:

"If there is one thing on which we can safely build, it is the great natural fact that each human being forms with his or her body and mind a separate entity – from which we must conclude that the entities belong to themselves and not to each other. As I have said, no other deduction is possible. If the entities do not belong to themselves, then we are reduced to the most absurd conclusion: A or B cannot own himself; but he can own, or part own, C or D."[12]

The Right to Produce

The right to one's own life implies a major corollary: the right to engage in the production of values which will sustain that life.[13,14] These values are accordingly the exclusive property of the individual who produces them. If an individual's property is seized from him by force (or threat of force), his right to his property does not transfer to the robber. This fact is not altered whether the robber is acting alone or is a member of a gang of robbers. Even if a majority of individuals in a given geographic area sanc-

12 Auberon Herbert, in Murray N. Rothbard, *Man, Economy, and State*, (Los Angeles, Nash Publishing, 1970), p. 159.

13 Gottfried Dietze, *In Defense of Property*, (Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins Press, 1963), p. 49.

14 Rothbard, *Power and Market*, pp. 176ff.

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tions the robbery, the owner has not lost his right to his property.[15] We can therefore posit that the right to one's own life, as well as the corollary rights thereof, accrue to each individual quite independent of the will of legislatures, presidents, or majorities. Rights, of course, cannot exist in conflict. Thus the right to use or dispose of one's property implies a mandate to refrain from physical interference, or the threat thereof, with another individual's right to use or dispose of his property.

A Right to Health Care?

On the basis of the foregoing we can now examine whether a right to health care can exist. Health care is a service provided by doctors and others to people who wish to purchase it. A person in need of health care (or, for that matter, food, clothing, housing, transportation, or recreation) does indeed possess a right to seek to enter into a bilaterally voluntary exchange with a health care provider (or grocer, clothier, builder, auto dealer, or travel agent). But the mere existence of a *need* for a service or good does not imply a *right* to it.

In current political parlance, the "right" to health care has come to mean *the right to health care at the expense of someone other than the recipient of the service.* There are four ways this can occur: 1) by the doctor voluntarily giving his services to the patient; 2) by a charitable individual or organization voluntarily donating the cost of the patient's treatment; 3) by the patient or his agent physically coercing the doctor into providing the service; or 4) by the patient purchasing the service with funds seized from others in the form of taxes. It should be immediately apparent that while the first two examples constitute morally proper transactions, the latter two constitute blatant abrogations of genuine rights: either the doctor owns his own life or the patient owns it; and, as in the fourth case, either the individual taxpayers own their own lives, or the patient owns them. The absurdity of a person in need of health care owning a part of a doctor's life, or a part of anyone else's life, has been well demonstrated by Herbert.

To claim, then, that medical care is a right – that a man has a right

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15 It is interesting to note that if we bestow the name of a government taxing authority (i.e., "the School Board" or "the County Tax Collector") upon the gang of robbers, the nature of the act of theft is not at all altered, nor does the proper owner of the seized property lose his right to it. See also Robert LeFevre, *The Philosophy of Ownership*, (Santa Ana, Rampart College Press, 1971), pp. 23-42.

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to be cared for by somebody else — raises the question: What of that other somebody's rights? Since rights cannot exist in conflict, we can arrive at no other logical conclusion: There exists no such thing as a right to health care.

What Can Be Done

Once we have disabused ourselves of such fallacies as the existence of a U.S. "health care crisis," the "right" to health care, or the ability of the government to deliver what the private sector cannot, we can get on with the business of trying to solve those medical and dental problems that are soluble *at all*. For example, approximately two-thirds of American mortalities other than those attributable to the senile cessation of body functions are due to diseases known to be caused or exacerbated by such factors of *personal choice* as alcohol, tobacco, or overeating; or due to accidents.[16] What government program, short of outright imprisonment, could change this?

Those who advocate NHI frequently attempt to buttress their position by pointing at the catastrophic illness that bankrupts a family; or the seemingly unresolvable "lifeboat" situation wherein a mythical doctor in a sparsely populated rural county demands an outrageous fee to save the young widow's life. Although it is often assumed that only the government can resolve these classical health dilemmas, this assumption is clearly in error. For example, it is an accepted norm in our society to insure one's house against fire; does not common sense dictate a similar practice with regard to one's own health? Catastrophic health insurance is readily available for the daily price of a package of cigarettes.[17] For the family that is so destitute that it cannot afford even the most modest health insurance premium, there exist in the U.S. today an abundance of private charitable organizations which offer all forms of succor, including health care, to the poor.[18] It is worthy of note that they exist in spite of confisca-

[16] Department of HEW, Public Health Service, *Vital Statistics of the United States 1968*, Vol. II. Mortality. Part A, (Rockville, Md. National Center for Health Statistics, 1972), pp. 1-6, 1-7. First pointed out by Robert M. Sade, *Medical Care as a Right: A Refutation*, *New Eng. J. Med.* 285; 1288-1292, Dec. 2, 1971.

[17] A guaranteed renewable, $2500 deductible, no maximum limit catastrophic health insurance policy for a family of four, for example, is available at a premium of 40¢ per day. See Robert J. Myers and E. Paul Barnhart, *Catastrophic Insurance, (Private Practice*, Vol. 4, No. 10, October 1972), pp. 23-42.

[18] See Richard Cornuelle, *Reclaiming the American Dream*, (New York, Random House, 1966). Cornuelle is chairman of a private charitable foundation.

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tory taxation on the private incomes that provide the bulk of their support. The "lifeboat" health situations are in actuality so rare that they cannot be used with any statistical validity in justifying a change in our present system of health care delivery.

Government-Caused Problems

Many of the ills that affect the health of the average American are due to poor diet and inadequate housing; not faulty health care. Those doctors who are willing to go beyond the confines of their clinical practices to relieve the distress of the medically indigent should examine the extent to which poverty – and the consequent inability to purchase sufficient health care, or the inability to live in a healthier environment – is the direct result of prior government intervention into the economy. Carson, Hazlitt, Anderson, and others[19,20] describe at length how many of the "disadvantaged" in our society are made so because government minimum wage laws have forcibly disemployed them; how workers, particularly minority group members, are excluded from the labor market by government-protected labor unions; how would-be entrepreneurs with little capital are denied entrance to many areas of business by expensive government licensing and government-created monopolies; how many of the poor are torn out of their modest homes and pushed into unhealthy slums to make room for the plush shopping malls, luxury highrise apartments, and freeways of government "urban renewal" projects; how inadequate diets are in part the result of government taxes which comprise almost half of the purchase price of food. It flies in the face of reason to suggest that medical indigency induced by previous government interventions into the economy be ameliorated by further government intrusion which will of itself additionally pauperize those who are taxed to pay for the new health programs.

Summary and Conclusions

While there are indeed some Americans who are not in a financial position to fully utilize all of the benefits of our free-enterprise health care system, this in no way indicates the existence of a "health care crisis" in this country. Their ability to purchase health care would be greatly improved, how-

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19 Yale Brozen, *Ghetto Economics*, (*Reason Magazine*, Vol. 3, No. 8: November 1971), pp. 8-12.

20 Dr. F. A. Harper, chairman of the Institute For Humane Studies: personal communication of November 20, 1972, relating to cost of government as a part of each dollar of personal income spent: 43 per cent as of 1972.

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ever, if they could obtain relief from the onerous burden of government taxation they are enduring.

The establishment of a system of socialized medicine is justified by its advocates because they feel some Americans have a "right" to health care at the expense of others. Some feel that the government could provide better health care than do private practitioners and private hospitals. Such justification is clearly in error, since there exists no such thing as a "right" to health care, nor is there a shred of evidence to indicate that the government could perform any better in the area of health care than it has in the areas of housing, education, agriculture, and other areas where its failures have been monumental. In fact, government Medicare and Medicaid programs are among the principal reasons for today's rising health care costs and clogged health facilities.

Since a medical millenium is an impossibility under any economic system, there will always be that small number of individuals who are unable to obtain the full services of the health care system. It is understandable, commendable, and in the American tradition to want to extend a helping hand to them. But does not prudence, as well as compassion for the overwhelming majority who fall within the existing system, demand that the rational critic of U.S. health care spend his time trying to improve our system, rather than trying to impose a radical change such as National Health Insurance would bring?

If the government succeeds in fastening socialized medicine upon the people of the United States, the quality and quantity of our health care will certainly decline. This will give future historians the unpleasant task of reporting that von Mises' observation of 1956 had become invalid: that the U.S. government, at least in terms of health care, had succeeded in adjusting the U.S. standard of living *downward* to match that of the rest of the world.

IDEAS ON LIBERTY

The Anti-Capitalistic Mentality

THE PEOPLE of the United States are more prosperous than the inhabitants of all other countries because their government embarked later than the governments in other parts of the world upon the policy of obstructing business.

LUDWIG VON MISES

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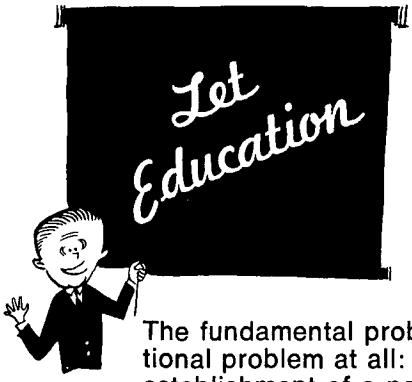

Go Commercial

THOMAS L. JOHNSON

The fundamental problem in education is not an educational problem at all: it is a social one. It consists in the establishment of a new and better relationship between the two great sections of society — children and adults.
— *Maria Montessori*

"NOT TOO many of us realize how bad American schools are from the point of view of humanity, respect, trust, or dignity," stated Charles E. Brown, once the Superintendent of the Newton, Massachusetts schools. "The values they transmit are the values of docility, passivity, conformity, and lack of trust," adds Charles E. Silberman, author of *Crisis in the Classroom*. This damning view of the role of schools in society is echoed by many thousands of concerned Americans who also recognize the many tragic circumstances that exist in schools. Some of them are attempting to offer solutions to the myriad problems.

Unfortunately, one rarely if ever hears the suggestion that the answer to the educational dilemma or "crisis" might well be found if the schools were to be dissolved and replaced by educational businesses, that is, businesses that operate like other enterprises in a competitive and open manner with the intention of satisfying customers. Most people, even staunch capitalists, consider education to be some special endeavor not to be perverted by the business world and thus pooh-pooh any suggestion of educational enterprises.

"It is time for our schools to get themselves, or us to get them, out of the jail business," wrote John Holt in *The Underachieving School*. The fact that schools are operated as "jails," which do not function to please customers but to satisfy those in charge, is very

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likely the explanation of the vast number of problems that permeate all levels of education, both private and public.

But how will the elimination of schools and their replacement with businesses of education solve all those problems that one is always hearing about? What of the inevitable question of discipline, of truancy, of cheating, of grades and degrees? How would such problems as teacher and student boredom and apathy be alleviated? And then there's the dropout problem.

What could happen in educational businesses to remove the always present conflict between teachers and students which results in little or no learning? How could one eliminate the unnatural competition among students (who compete for grades and pleasing the teachers, and rarely for knowledge), the rigid and outdated curriculum, the physical mistreatment of students by teachers and administrators (where corporal punishment is permitted), or the whole concept and practice of having to fulfill specific requirements in order to even enter certain schools?

What of the question of incompetent teachers, or the matter of the physical damage to schools carried out by frustrated and angered students (millions of dollars are spent each year by school systems in major American cities to pay for the replacement of broken school windows)? Or what of the need to eliminate a negative approach to learning which now exists in schools and the introduction of techniques allowing for individualized instruction? And then there is the vastly important matter of economics, of the financing of education, which has provoked much concern and heated debate in numerous communities across the nation. (According to a recently published Copley News Service release, "the yearly bill for education in America is now running at around $85 billion. Allowing for inflation, that is double what it was a decade ago.")

Could educational businesses solve these and many other concerns which have caused such a flood of outrage from students, teachers, (particularly new young teachers who really want to teach, but find most of their time occupied with paper work and disciplining students), parents, politicians, and many other thoughtful individuals? Let us examine this question and see.

Discipline

The chronic, all-pervading, and seemingly insoluble problem that besets mainly primary and secondary schools is that of discipline –

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how to keep order in the classrooms, hallways, cafeteria, and the like. One might even say that the matter of discipline is the bane of all administrators and teachers, as well as students. But then how could it be otherwise, considering the way in which schools operate?

Just suppose that we adults were required, by law, to attend an institution five or six hours a day and to perform certain tasks or learn specific information for which we might have little or no interest. Suppose that we had to follow unquestioningly the commands of those in charge, and knew that if we should decide to complain too vigorously about anything that we would probably be punished physically or penalized scholastically – that our very future might be placed in jeopardy if we should speak out too often.

And how would we like it if in this institution we had to keep silent most of the time, move from one place to another only when bells rang, and receive written permission to go almost anywhere in the building if this varied the slightest from our regular schedule? And how would we feel if we knew that almost all of our actions were being watched, not only in the classroom, but by hall monitors (guards), and that if we tried to escape from this institution we could be picked up by the police and returned, or if we refused to go back or continued to escape, we could be sent to prison (another type of prison, that is)?

Not only would we adults, realizing that our very rights were at stake, create a constant discipline problem under these circumstances; we probably would be enraged enough to engage in a full-fledged revolution. Well, students have to put up with precisely these conditions in schools, and it is amazing that they have not done more than just attempt to assert their rights occasionally and thereby create discipline problems.

Now what would happen to discipline if schools were abandoned and we instead turned to businesses of education? The problem of maintaining order and obedience would, for all intents and purposes, vanish. Since a business cannot force customers to use its services and cannot require its clientele to buy specific items, it cannot usurp the basic right of each individual: the right of free choice. Educational enterprises would only be able to offer certain courses of instruction and hope that the prospective customers, mainly young people, would find these of sufficient value to voluntarily purchase them. Students would only sign up for those classes that they really desired,

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and could drop out of any they found not to be of value.

In such circumstances, classes would contain mainly students who desire instruction in a particular subject – who, out of interest (which is the only valid motivation for learning), really want to learn what is being taught. In such a class, the likelihood that anyone would cause disruption is slim; if someone did, it probably would be the other customers, the students, who would demand that the culprit pipe down or leave. The interested students would not wish to lose even a bit of the instruction for which they, or their parents, had paid and which they desired to learn.

Boredom

Boredom is the inevitable cardinal element present in any environment where individual interest and choice are either limited or absent, and where everyone is trying to force someone else to do something that he doesn't want to do – where everything is done by permission ("Teacher, may I . . .") and not by right, and where much of the time is spent doing busy- or make-work just to fill the number of minutes in a class period.

But businesses cannot afford to bore their customers; if they do, they go out of business. Boredom would become a thing of the past in education if students were free to choose only those subjects which they wished to study, *when* they wished to study them, and were free to drop out of a class if they found it to be of no value or of no interest at that particular time. It is the trapping of students in classrooms that results in boredom, unrest, frustration and anger (that leads to drug-taking and the destruction of property). Educational businesses, wishing to please both customers and employees (teachers), would have no desire to create circumstances that would be damaging to all parties concerned – no desire to bore anyone.

Grades and Degrees

One hears a great deal about these outmoded tools of the educational institution, and some schools have even tried to eliminate them, without success. No matter what variation on a theme is utilized – whether it be written teacher evaluations, or pass and fail grades or the full scale of number or letter grades, or whether the institution grants diplomas, certificates, degrees or just overall evaluations of students – it is the educational institutions and teachers that are evaluating the customers, and not vice versa. Therein lies the problem, and the reason why schools can operate as prisons.

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How many students would continue to attend schools as they are now operated (unless forced to do so by either their parents or by compulsory education laws) if grades and degrees were eliminated? How many parents would continue to put up with the tragic circumstances which they know their children are exposed to in schools if they did not think that it was an absolute necessity for their offspring to have a diploma or degree in order to survive at a decent level in society? But the grades and degrees that hold the entire operation of the schools intact would be absent from educational businesses.

A business cannot certificate an individual to a particular place in society. It cannot act as a screening agency, allowing some to progress and others to stand still, fall back, or fail. A true business only has the right to sell goods or services for which there is a demand, and to prosper or fail according to how well it is able to satisfy its customers.

Businesses of education would not offer to sell degrees, diplomas, or certificates, but only instruction, and any evaluation of the customer (student) that might transpire would be at the request of the customer, without fear of punishment or failure. After all, businesses must please customers, not intimidate them. True businesses of education would be ones in which the customers evaluated the teachers and the overall operation of the institution, to determine if customers are getting their money's worth for the service, instruction, they are purchasing – not the other way around, as is now the case. And when individuals went job-hunting, it would be the employers who would, at that time, evaluate prospective employees rather than accept a scholastic certification as to what an individual knows.

Other Problems

But what about all of the other problems that beset the realm of education? Would they also disappear if schools were displaced by businesses of education?

Cheating certainly would. If a student is not working for a grade or a degree, or does not have to please the teacher, but is only striving for knowledge of interest to him, what possible reason would he have for cheating? And what possible type of competition could exist in such a setting except that of a healthy and natural competition; a competition among students for knowledge, for understanding, for truth.

The conflict that now exists between student and teacher (as always exists between prisoner and

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guard) would also disappear, for in a business situation the teacher would attempt to please the customer by offering valuable instruction, and the student would cooperate with the instructor in order to learn. Instead of being in conflict, they would be working together to achieve mutually desirable goals, as is always the case in a free enterprise setting.

Certainly, the outdated and rigid curriculums that now are forced upon students by schools, via state and local boards of education, would have to be set aside if schools were replaced by educational businesses. After all, customers will only purchase that which they desire. In a business environment, course offerings would be constantly changing and would be continually updated. And there would be no holding back on the use of technological advances to offer individualized instruction whenever this seemed appropriate to the course. Innovation is the hallmark of a free market, and stagnation a main feature of an authoritarian, bureaucratic system.

And what of all those entrance requirements? Does one find special requirements for shopping at the supermarket, department store or laundry? Of course not. These businesses are out to attract customers, not to limit their buying the goods and services that are for sale. Educational businesses would surely operate in like manner.

Also, anyone, regardless of age, could purchase instruction in a course and not have to worry about first having gotten a grade school, high school, or college education in order to be qualified for entrance. Thus, *real* equality of opportunity in education would finally come into existence.

Eliminated would be the dropout problem that now plagues so many school systems. A free enterprise approach calls for dropping in, not out. It also calls for the treating of customers with respect and courtesy. It would be difficult indeed to imagine a businessman inflicting corporal punishment on his customers; it simply would not occur. "We aim to please" is, and must be, the businessman's motto.

As for incompetent teachers, they would soon be weeded out of the business of education; as their lack of ability became known, few if any customers would voluntarily sign up for their classes. Only the best would survive in educational businesses, the same as in any business setting.

Financing

Finally, what about the matter of money? What of the economics of the educational world? Schools,

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which operate like giant bureaucracies with their administrators increasing like rabbits – with assistant superintendents, principals, assistant principals, coordinators of this or that, along with scores of secretaries and clerks, all at handsome salaries – and whose customers must attend under force of the law, have little or no interest in economy. The only concern is to determine how much more the school board dare ask of taxpayers for next year's budget.

But businesses of education could not operate in this manner. They would have to obtain their funds from individual willing customers, just as other businesses do. And because it has been demonstrated that the rate of learning increases tremendously when interest is the driving factor, rather than coercion, only a fraction (probably less than half) of the time now devoted to studies in schools would be needed to learn an equivalent amount in a business situation – thus, a tremendous saving in energy and money. Also, competition is extensive in a business environment, and costs are inevitably lowered as a result of open competition, thereby allowing even the poorest families to afford the costs involved in giving their children an education in basic subjects.

With educational businesses, customers would only be purchasing just what they want – what they are interested in – rather than being forced to sit in classrooms throughout the day. Thus, many of the current costs of education would disappear. Only in a free market setting does one find economic efficiency.

There are those who would argue that all of the problems which are associated with education cannot really be resolved because of the nature of the circumstances; because, they claim, the child is simply not able to make sound judgments and therefore cannot be allowed freedom of choice in matters mental. But anyone who has carefully observed the child will have discovered that a youth of 5 or 6 years of age has a keen sense of judgment – he knows when his teacher is helpful or not, when he is learning or not, and he most definitely is aware of what he is interested in knowing at that particular time.

Judgment is not only his capability, but his right, and if this be denied the child, by placing him in an authoritarian school where he is obliged not to judge and choose, but obey, he must experience serious harm. As Maria Montessori points out: "It is easy to substitute our will for that of the child by means of suggestion or coercion; but when we have done

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this we have robbed him of his greatest right, the right to construct his own personality. If the child is constantly acting at the command of the teacher, or at her suggestion, his own psychic activity may fade away and disappear under the stronger will of another; the personality may become broken and depressed; and abnormal developments will begin to appear." (*Maria Montessori: Her Life and Work* by E. M. Standing)

Perhaps the most succinct and revealing indictment of schools was expressed by Charles E. Silberman in his extensively researched book, *Crisis in the Classroom:*

> It is not possible to spend any prolonged period visiting public school classrooms without being appalled by the mutilation visible everywhere – mutilation of spontaneity, of joy in learning, of pleasure in creating, of sense of self. The public schools – those "killers of the dream," to appropriate a phrase of Lillian Smith's – are the kind of institution one cannot really dislike until one gets to know them well. Because adults take the schools so much for granted, they fail to appreciate what grim, joyless places most American schools are, how oppressive and petty are the rules by which they are governed, how intellectually sterile and esthetically barren the atmosphere, what an appalling lack of civility obtains on the part of teachers and principals, what contempt they unconsciously display for children as children.

Must we continue this mutilation, or could we perhaps find a solution to this dilemma by trying something new? No matter how much money is pumped into the educational system, or how many new programs are devised and tried out on the students, the problems that are centuries old continue to exist. Would it be taking too much of a chance to try a new approach, one which involves freedom and mutual respect rather than force and the obliteration of rights?

Why not let education go commercial? Why not try the free enterprise approach which has made this nation the greatest in the world? If the business environment could sustain our rights as free citizens and give us a bounty of goods and services undreamed of by most people of the world, just imagine what this same environment could do for the child and the development of his mind. We might yet achieve that much sought, but always elusive goal – the American Dream – if we would only displace the scholastic prisons, the schools (those "killers of the dream"); if we would only free the children.

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Welfare as a Right

RIDGWAY K. FOLEY, JR.

"WELFARE is a right, not a privilege" is a popular cliché which calls for an immediate and forceful rejoinder. Despite the obvious error latent in the phrase, this declaration assails us daily from myriad sources in varying guises. The National Welfare Rights Organization made the statement in its clearest form but similar utterances emanate from groups claiming that child care, food stamps, and all manner of handouts exist as a matter of right.

Reason permits penetration of myths and fallacies; and definition of terms, illuminating the problem, constitutes the first step toward reason.

Welfare

Like other open-textured words, "welfare" possesses a variety of meanings. Like other terms utilized in the political arena, it is subject to corruption by both friend and foe.

Recur to Webster, the common authority. The primary meaning assigned to "welfare" encompasses "the state of faring or doing well, thriving or successful progress in life: a state characterized especially by good fortune, happiness, well-being, or prosperity"[1] Dr. Sisson offers the following synonyms which reflect a similar understanding: "aid; future; good; happiness; health; progress; prosperity; sele; success; weal; well-being."[2] Thus, the traditional meaning assigned to the term conjures up thoughts of goodness, happiness, prosperity and well-being.

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1 Webster's Third New International Dictionary (unabridged, G & C Merriam Company, Springfield, Mass, 1966) 2594.

2 Sisson, F. A., *Sisson's Synonyms* (Parker Publishing Company, Inc., West Nyack, New York, 1966) 678.

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Webster's secondary definition illustrates the gradual erosion of the word as it becomes politicalized: "Of, relating to; or concerned with welfare and especially with *improvement* of the welfare of social groups (as children, workers, or underprivileged or disabled persons)" (emphasis supplied). Thus, we move from a definition which described a desirable state of affairs (one which might be somewhat difficult to achieve) to a corrupted definition manifesting concern with *improvement* or imposition of that state, apparently by the actions of men.

Clearly, those who urge that "welfare is a right, not a privilege" do not by that statement mean that happiness, prosperity, well-being or good fortune constitute fundamental, unassailable rights – or do they?

The emasculation of the word becomes complete when we review Webster's definition of "welfare state," for here we discover that the polemical wordsmiths have journeyed from a descriptive meaning to an extensive one, an urge to action:

> A social system based upon the assumption by a political state of primary responsibility for the individual and social welfare of its citizens usually by the enactment of specific public policies (as health and unemployment insurance, minimum wages and prices, and subsidies to agriculture, housing, and other segments of the economy) and their implementation directly by governmental agencies.

Instead of describing an ideal, those who use the word now seek to impose their views of the ideal upon others by coercion. Notice that each and every example in the dictionary definition of "welfare state" involves government coercion of the individual, a mulcting of his free choice. No longer is he able to seek his own destiny – his own way to good fortune, well-being, prosperity and happiness; instead some other individual or group arrogates the authority to decide for him what he wants or needs to secure euphoria. Thus has the definition moved from traditional description to methodology, and a false methodology at that!

In its primary sense, "welfare" remains open-textured; any individual can discern for himself what constitutes happiness, prosperity and well-being; these goals vary from person to person. In the secondary sense, "welfare" assumes knowledge on the part of someone of what constitutes happiness, prosperity, and well-being for all others within a group, class, or society.

Properly analyzed, then, the de-

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clarant of the cliché means that government interventions in the economy benefiting some individuals and groups at the expense of others is a right, not a privilege. Boldly stated, this utterance seems questionable; as we shall see, after a brief analysis of the concepts of "right" and "privilege," it actually borders on sham.

What is a Right?

"Right" refers to another of those baffling terms which, seemingly clear in application, flit about like a noisy ghost when one seeks a precise definition. It is a word of many shadings of meaning, none of them exact; a perusal of Webster's reveals one page of fine print devoted to the term; recourse to a jural lexicographer offers three pages of definition.[3]

Part of the confusion arises from the human tendency to use the same words at different times in different contexts to mean different things. Thus, a speaker may initially use the word "right" to mean any obligation legally enforceable by one man against another and yet, on another occasion, utter the same word as meaning a seminal power inherent in an individual just because he is a human being, notwithstanding (or sometimes, in spite of) the coercion of organized government. Black's Law Dictionary exhibits this particular befuddlement:

> . . . a power, privilege, faculty, or demand, inherent in one person and incident upon another. "Rights" are defined generally as "powers of free action." And the primal rights pertaining to man are undoubtedly enjoyed by human beings purely as such, being grounded in personality, and existing antecedently to their recognition by positive law. But leaving the abstract moral sphere, and giving to the term a juristic content, a "right" is well defined as a "capacity residing in one man of controlling, with the assent and assistance of the state, the action of others." (p. 1486)

Further blurring the identity, some append the adjective "natural" to "right," when utilizing it in its fundamental moral meaning:

> *Natural* rights are those which grow out of the nature of man and depend upon personality, as distinguished from such as are created by law and depend upon civilized society; (p. 1487)

Let us isolate and comment upon the essential meaning of a "right." It is something fundamental, inherent in man's person

[3] Black's Law Dictionary (4th edition, West Publishing Company, St. Paul, Minn., 1951) 1486-1488.

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merely because he is a person. It cannot be justly disparaged by another man or group of men; it exists beyond the reach of mankind and emanates from the Essence of the Universe. It deals with free action, with voluntary use of faculties in all fields of endeavor.

Properly construed, a right exists without law, without the sanction of a legal system – once one assumes the necessity of a juridical unit to *establish* rights, he must also posit that that same body may *limit* or *destroy* those identical rights. Consider reality: if the right of free speech, free press, and free association, guaranteed by the First and Fourteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution do not inhere in mankind but exist only because of some writing on a crumbling document, the guarantees mean little: in periods of stress, martial law may be impaired by the same authority which produced the Constitution, allegedly justifying the "temporary" removal or restriction of those rights.

Contrary to Black's definition, a right need not favor one person to the detriment of another. Properly analyzed, the existence of rights in one man benefits all mankind. Man should be free to choose his own destiny in all enterprises. The sole justifiable limitation on this liberty rests in the injunction that no man shall use his powers to coerce or deny an equal freedom in all other human beings. My freedom diminishes to the extent that I do not possess the right to murder my neighbor; his liberty likewise lessens because he may not lawfully take my life. But to ascribe to rights the attribute that the existence of a right in A diminishes the corresponding right in B fails to ring true. A's right to order his life does not conflict with B's equal, reciprocal right (except in the limited sense that neither may coerce or defraud the other); indeed, a vast multitude of actors, each seeking their own ends, effectively produce material well-being (or welfare in one sense) beyond the wildest imaginations of the utopian planner. My right to produce shoes does not infringe upon my neighbor's right to produce shoes in competition with me; we each create value; that value is measured by the choice of others who wish to purchase shoes, exercising their respective rights to choose.

A fundamental right must preexist a jural system, but it may exist contemporaneously with such a system. The appropriate interrelationship between essential rights and the jural system appears in the Jeffersonian phrase,

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"That *to secure these rights*, governments are instituted among men."[4] Rights inhere in man because he is a human being endowed with such powers by his nature and by the principles which govern the universe. The sole legitimate function of that organized force we call the state, or government, is to secure – protect against invasion – these rights in every individual. The result: each man remains free to follow the dictates of his conscience and to seek his own destiny.

Privilege Contrasted

Analysis of the concept of "privilege" indicates that such an assertion means something quite different than a fundamental right; indeed, the word partakes of the veiled meaning of right dependent upon legal sanction for its continued existence:

> A particular and peculiar benefit or advantage enjoyed by a person, company, or class beyond the common advantages of other citizens. An exceptional or extraordinary power or exemption. A right, power, franchise or immunity held by a person or class, against or beyond the course of the law.[5]

In short, a privilege denotes a special power, favor or advantage granted by law to one individual or group, conferring particular rights upon the recipient to his benefit and to the concurrent detriment of others in society. Unlike a fundamental right, the existence of which benefits not only the holder but also all others in society, a privilege favors one and demeans another, all backed by the coercion of the state.

Monopolies and subsidies offer common examples of privileges. The state grants a monopoly franchise to ABC Power Company, excluding all others who wish to generate, transmit, and distribute electric power in a given territory, and exacting tribute in return by means of restrictions on freedom of choice (e.g., excise taxes, franchise taxes, limitations on hiring and personnel policies, rate tariffs). ABC Power Company receives a privilege – one for which it pays dearly in real terms. Again, Farmer Brown and Businessman Smith glean gifts of money from the national government for permitting land to stay fallow or for producing certain machine tools. Since government creates nothing, the funds transferred to Farmer Brown and Businessman Smith derive from other individual value-creators in society; the funds change hands by means of coercion; the creator of

[4] Declaration of Independence, United States of America.

[5] Black's *op cit*, p. 1359.

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value is taxed by the state so as to support Smith and Brown, and he acquiesces only because he does not wish to be killed, maimed or jailed by the collective force of society.

These simple examples of privilege disclose another differentiating aspect from right: a privilege cannot exist without an underlying jural system since, by postulate, a privilege takes from one and gives to another by force and thereby wholly depends upon the law for its sanction.

Furthermore, privileges do not connote "powers of free action" for they inhibit the freedom of the disadvantaged person or group. Unlike fundamental rights, privileges, being dependent upon government, may be altered, changed, or obliterated by the granting authority. In sum, privileges lack the enduring qualities of rights.

Consider The Phrase: Is Welfare A Right Or A Privilege?

Armed with this linguistic analysis, let us now consider the utterance, "welfare is a right, not a privilege." What does the declarant mean? He or she can only mean that a system of government and law which supplies advantages, subsidies, and favors to one segment of society (the "disadvantaged," whoever they are at that moment) endows the recipient class with a fundamental power to receive this largess, a power which pre-exists and supersedes the state, even though these donations unduly hamper the freedom of choice of other individuals in that society.

Can a rational man truly accept the position that the state should coerce and defraud citizens of value they have created so as to benefit other, less productive creatures? Even assuming that the state has the *power* to bestow exacted value upon selected members of society (less a substantial handling charge, of course), how can intelligent people really believe that the ability to receive such benevolence not only pre-exists the state but also stands beyond the reach of popular termination? What the proponents of the cliché truly propose is a system whereby benefits, once granted, can never be diminished or terminated. Most aid programs never cease, but the voluntarist retains the fond hope that someday, somehow, libertarian legislators will dismantle at least some of the cumbersome, expensive and freedom-throttling machinery of the state. No objective observer can accept the proposition that once a program designed to promote the real or imagined well-being of one person becomes law, that law for-

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ever freezes into the system beyond the possibility of change. Yet, apparently that is the expectation of those who cry, "welfare is a right, not a privilege."

Realistically viewed, the shibboleth asks mankind to weld into a juristic and socio-economic system the concept that "might makes right." Reduced to its bare bones, the phrase means that some group should gain at the expense of others, and that the state should not only effect that gain by use of its collective force but also supply some sort of moral sanction for its own activities as well as those of the beseeching donees. Simply stated, the welfarists assert that they are entitled, because of ability, talent or some other inherent attributes, to the fruits of the labor of their neighbors at a particular point in time and that once they start receiving these advantages, no one should ever interfere with the steady flow of coerced goods into their coffers. They possess the power to mulct others but they deny an equal reciprocal power to others to protect themselves, and they possess the additional audacity to demand that their victims acquiesce in the looting because the conduct, while reprehensible to most of us, deserves the armor of moral propriety!

Contrary to the fallacy implicit in the phrase, power and coercion do not constitute moral absolutes in our universe. You may steal my goods, or destroy your neighbor — you have that power. Existence of power does not equate with what is right, just, and proper. Might does not make right.

Man's Capacity for Sympathy

Clarify the analysis. No one rails against the unfortunate members of society who are disadvantaged by accident, illness, tragedy, or station in life. Sympathy exists as a natural and desirable attribute of man. Each of us feels sympathy and empathy for those less fortunate: the widow raising young children, the blind man, the crippled veteran, the homeless alcoholic. In some instances, tragedy visits those who do not seem to deserve that fate; in other cases, man acts in such a way as to encourage his own problems. But in either event, most human beings feel a very real sorrow and compassion for their beleaguered neighbors.

Because of this natural capacity for sympathy, most of us are interested in the well-being, happiness, and prosperity of others in society; to that extent, we favor their welfare. But it is a far cry from this position to condone gifts of assistance to these sympathetic creatures when the gifts are ravaged from other people who cre-

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ated value and whose only crime consists of the desire to keep what they created. Who knows whether those despoiled could have put their property to better use than the donees? Who among us possesses the god-like faculty for making this kind of arrogant value judgment? Perhaps welfare subsidizes a needy one-legged veteran, but the tax which pays the subsidy is exacted from a hard-working woman in poor health who valiantly strives to save some of her earnings for early retirement so she can live the rest of her labored days in comfort and perhaps stretch the pleasurable portions of her life out by weeks, months, or years. Which of us possesses the omniscience to foresee and fit each life together to achieve perfect harmony and justice in the balance? And who among us truly desires and possesses the capacity for making such awful judgments? Not I.

The Needy Veteran versus the Spoiled Brat

But to make the point more lucidly, let us posit the welfare recipient as a bedridden veteran, crippled and blinded, unable to secure gainful employment through no fault of his own with three motherless infants to rear. Presuppose that the recipient's subsidy emanates directly from the pockets of a ne'er-do-well scion of a millionaire who has never done a lick of work in his life, whose sole career appears to consist of drinking, wenching, and riding trail bikes in sylvan glens. Almost all of us would sympathize with the condition of the disabled veteran; many of us would gladly donate from our meagre store of value so that he might live a more prosperous and happy life – and we would do so voluntarily *sans* coercive government. Moreover, many of us would say that the spoiled brat of the rich man led a worthless life and ought to support the poor veteran. But even this supposed situation should not sway us from our firm resolve never to deprive our neighbor of his equal and reciprocal rights. Even in such a stark setting, not one of us, not even the poor veteran, possesses a *right* to coerce or defraud the rich young man of his life, his liberty, or his property. He may merit our disapproval; we may wish not to associate with him; but we must ever quell the urge to victimize him, for in the instant that we attempt to justify our sacking of his freedom we sow the seed which will devour our own liberty. If one man may be mulcted, all may be despoiled – the bars are down.

Remember one point well: coercion cannot right a wrong or

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correct an ill; it can only compound injustice. Voluntary action may cure all defects in society, at least those which can be aided by finite man. Voluntary action will feed the hungry, cloth the ragged, comfort the fatherless, and attend the sick – all without forceful intervention. No one contests the well-meaning goals of the welfarist, for all men of good will desire happiness and prosperity for their neighbors. But clarity requires intent – an intent to give and desire to receive. True charity cannot be coerced. Thus, while I may share the goals of the welfarist, be it fair employment, fair wages, good health, long life, or general happiness, I engage in no charity when I pass a law commanding each member of society to pay part of his property to those laudable ends. Only when I voluntarily give to a worthwhile cause do I engage in charity, for coercion destroys true charity.

Some proponents of welfare aver that recipients are demeaned by handouts, and that donees need dignity. All persons require dignity; few like to take unearned property from others. But a coercive mask cannot alter reality, and all the disguises in the world cannot change a handout into a right. Perhaps lessened dignity will induce more recipients to become productive again; certainly the "morality of force" amounts to no morality at all, and welfare cannot be considered a right by thinking men.

IDEAS ON LIBERTY

It Is More Blessed

GIVE A MAN a handout today – and tomorrow he'll probably be back for another. Create a job for a man today – and tomorrow he will pay his own way, his family's way, a part of the cost of his government, and may be able himself to help the needy.

A job calls forth initiative and bolsters self-respect. A handout diminishes both. The person who invests in an enterprise that provides jobs performs a humanitarian act. To the Biblical counsel that it is more blessed to give than to receive, therefore, might be added the advice that it is more blessed to invest than to give.

JAMES C. PATRICK

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An open letter from a young American . . .

DEAR AMERICA:

I AM YOUR SON; but you do not know me (except as 290-54-0981). I am a man, now. I am a man able to see with my own eyes what in my heart I believe is good, and what I fear is evil.

I am proud to be a part of you. I thank God every day that the accident of birth made me one of your sons. But because of my love for you, I am afraid.

I am morbidly afraid that the corruption of greed and ignorance will destroy all that you and I stand for.

As long as I can remember, you impressed upon me the blessings of property rights; but now there are others who decide how much of what I earn is mine, and how much is theirs, even before I see it. Not that I don't want to share. They won't let me! They say they "share" it for me – thus denying me the self-respect one feels in helping another on his own. My good will is made mandatory. They tell me it is my obligation to let them give of me, to the "deserving."

Time and again you told me that to strive for perfection is the ultimate goal. You encouraged me always to reach higher; yet, when I aspire, I am shunned. I attempt my best, and the labels I receive are "reactionary" and "establishment." I am admonished to underproduce, lest others' lack of initiative become apparent. I lose more than I gain when I work extra hours which force me into a "higher bracket."

Time and again you have told me that I must have pride in my work; but many of my fellow men find it less profitable to work than to be idle.

Your schools have attempted to teach me that "self" is unimportant and wrong; that the good of the "people" is the highest priority; that there are no absolutes, and therefore no real ownership; and that "equality" alone remains.

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Time and again you told me that a law is a law – the same for everyone. One breaks the law, one goes to jail. If one feels the law to be unjust, one tries to change it within the system, and by doing so, demonstrates one's faith in it. Yet, only yesterday, men broke the law and ran away, shouting such epithets as "fascist state," and "imperialistic," and branding me "nationalistic" and idealistic. Today, they call you "home," and me "brother." They want to come back as if nothing had happened. They tell me this is their "right."

Other nations have damned us, threatened us, and fought us. Their basic creed included, and still entails, the ideal of a world dominated by communism, resulting in the destruction of democracy. Yet, we are becoming increasingly open to these countries. While communist guns are killing men who are defending their democratic nations, our leaders are socializing and trying to buy their friendship.

Please do not misunderstand. I am not condemning you. I would remain silent if I did not care. I love you, America. You and I must become the best we possibly can. I do not want us to be tramped on, lied to, and squeezed dry by lazy, greedy nondoers who claim it is our obligation to stagnate at their inferior levels.

God bless you, America. Be never less than the Land of the Free; the land of promise and opportunity; not a deserted island of mediocrity.

Let me be the best man I can. Let me produce to my limit, for my benefit, and in turn for yours.

I am a man, now. I see the evil and the good. I see both the deadly shadow of "social obligation" and the brilliant hope of individual freedom; and in turn the promise of moral responsibility.

I am an American, today, tomorrow, and forever.

Your son,

Howard D. Aley

290-54-0981

Mr. Aley of Youngstown is Publications Director of Ohio Young Americans for Freedom.

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LEONARD E. READ

How to STOP INFLATION

To know truly is to know by causes.
— *Francis Bacon*

HOW TO STOP INFLATION? Remove the cause! Stopping inflation is as simple and as difficult as that. Everyone says he's against inflation; yet, what do we find? Nearly everyone overlooking the sole remedy and, instead, conjuring up schemes to soften inflation's disastrous effects. Interestingly, all schemes or nostrums which ignore the cause, if and when adopted, sink us ever deeper into the mire. As if inflation weren't bad enough, most proffered "cures" would worsen the situation!

Many years ago a professor of economics told a group of us about his experiences at the University of Heidelberg during the German inflation. Faculty members were paid once a month. As the inflation began to gallop, they were paid twice a month, then each week, then each day. Finally, they were paid in the morning, rushing the checks home to their *Frauen* before going to their classrooms. Why? Prices were multiplying many times each day, so shop in the morning! There came a time – August 1923 – when 100 billion marks would not buy a loaf of bread.

What was this professor's recommendation to those in our group who foresaw similar problems in our own country? His advice was to out-produce inflation! Imagine a professor of economics not understanding that all production creates its own purchasing power!

A few thoughts inspired by the professor's naive thinking: Production involves the efficient combination and use of scarce re-

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sources, in the process paying for each resource a price high enough to pull it away from other owners and other uses. To produce more housing, for instance, involves paying higher wages, higher prices for lumber, hardware, masonry, and the like, to attract those scarce resources from other uses. Meanwhile, each supplier of such resources has the additional income to spend, a process sometimes expressed as Say's Law: "Production creates its own purchasing power."

The truth is that inflation does not result from the lack of housing or other goods or services. It is nothing more nor less than the printing of what the government has declared to be legal tender, that is, printing ever-increasing quantities of fiat money. Unless house-building or other productive activities stop those printing presses – an absurdity – then trying to out-produce inflation is as futile as trying to out-run one's own shadow. So the professor's cure is on a level with most remedies now being dinned into our ears.

Trying to Live with It

It is not that the inventors of these schemes agree with inflation. Quite the contrary! Rather, it is that they see no way to be rid of it; inflation is here to stay – even worsen – thus, why not find a way to prosper and thrive in a monetary holocaust! The fact that this requires non-existent skills in legerdemain deters them not.

Two such schemes recently came to my attention. The first proposes that all contracts – loans, for instance – be repaid (legally enforced) in dollars of the same purchasing value as when contracted. If the value of the dollar should decline at the rate of 15 per cent a year, then a 10-year loan of a thousand dollars would be repaid in the amount of more than $5,000, plus interest.

Even in the face of the current inflationary pattern, what borrower would be willing to sign such a contract? Only the person who cannot see "beyond the end of his nose." There would be little if any futures trading; indeed, contractual relations would all but cease, production would decline at a frightening rate. Further, there is nothing in this scheme to halt the outpouring of fiat money; it would go on its merry way and, because of the fall off in production, the dollar would buy far less than were the scheme never adopted. Approval? Indeed, not!

The other scheme requires that all business ventures be compelled to adopt the "profit-sharing" procedure – employees as well as entrepreneurs sharing in the gains.

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This is inspired by some remarkable successes such as Lincoln Electric of Cleveland. The assumption is that if Jim Lincoln could, by this arrangement, earn a great deal for himself, pay higher wages than others, and undersell all of his competitors, so could everyone else – hundreds of thousands of businessmen from hamburger stand owners to General Motors. Simply pass a law and make every entrepreneur operate like Mr. Lincoln!

Overlooked is the fact that only one Jim Lincoln ever existed. There are no two entrepreneurs who operate their businesses alike, nor could they do so if they tried. Each is novel to some extent; and consumers – that's all of us – are thus advantaged.

Any profit-sharing arrangement should, in all fairness, be also a loss-sharing arrangement. But most wage earners would shy away from any employer who required employees to share any losses his business might incur. Why? Tens of thousands of businesses fail annually, as everyone knows.

Were profit-sharing made compulsory for everyone, production would dramatically decline, just as in the first scheme. There would be other results, no less disastrous.

Out-producing inflation or fulfilling contracts at a constant purchasing power or forcing every business to engage in profit-sharing are no more than "pipe dreams." Adoption need not be feared. These schemes merely illustrate how people avoid pinpointing the cause of inflation and, thus, propose remedies which compound the problem.

Price Control and Rationing

However, what do we find in the day-to-day world of "practical" politics? The worst of all possible schemes: price control and rationing as edicts by the Federal government and wage controls in the hands of labor unions. Below-market prices and above-market wages! Inflation is not questioned; we have instead only futile attempts to escape the effects, which make the effects increasingly disastrous. In what way? Production is both diminished and distorted. Figuring out how to out-scheme the political schemers takes the place of discovering how best to satisfy consumer preferences. Schemers with political and coercive power make schemers of every one of us they overpower.

To illustrate: By reason of governmental intervention, the supply of gas and oil is curbed and the demand increased. What to do? Ration the fuel! To the station attendant say, "Fill 'er up." "Sorry, only $3 worth to a person." So the

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car owner takes what he can get and goes to another station repeating, "Fill 'er up." Gas wasted going from station to station! Eventually, all the gas is gone, but consumers still have "gas money" burning holes in their pockets. The best way to ration gas or any other scarce resource is to let the price rise to a point where the supply is sufficient to meet the demand.

We need only come to our senses to stop inflation; nothing is required beyond discovering its cause and then being rid of it. The cause? *Over-extended government.* To repeat what many of us have written over and over again: when the costs of government rise beyond the point where it is no longer politically expedient to defray the costs by direct tax levies, governments all over the world resort to an expansion of paper money – inflation – as a means of making up the difference. Inflation dilutes and depreciates the medium of exchange as a means of syphoning private property into the coffers of government.[1] Here we have the cause, so simple to see through. But being rid of the cause is not simple. Why the difficulty?

The difficulty is rooted in an unintelligent interpretation of self-interest. Today, all of us without exception are feeding more or less at the Federal trough. True, there are a few who are force-fed, not dipping into the trough willingly. Finding it necessary to live in the world as it is, they participate in the deficit-burdened, socialistic mail system – to name but one of many examples. But most citizens today – a number perilously approaching 100 per cent – mistakenly feel that they have a vested interest in the continuance of one or more, if not all, Federal "programs" that go to make up the deficits that can be met only by inflation: fiat money made possible by legal tender laws.

Various Vested Interests

Perhaps this citizen only wishes to be paid for not farming, another to receive social security or Medicare, still others to be protected against competition, or to have their education subsidized, or a Gateway Arch for their home town, or whatever. It would take a book just to list the titles of all the Federal handouts and discriminatory edicts.[2] Anyway, count the persons you know who completely

[1] For a more complete explanation of the cause, see my pamphlet, "The Essence of Americanism." Copy on request.

[2] See *Encyclopedia of U.S. Government Benefits*, a tome of more than 1,000 pages with over 10,000 "benefits." (Union City, N.J.: Wm. H. Wise and Co., Inc., 1965.)

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ignore the "gravy train," who would concede nothing to government beyond a peace-keeping, justice-dispensing agency of society, who are free from the feeling that they have a vested interest in this or that deficit-creating, political gimmick. They are "as rare as hens' teeth!"

If an individual could perfectly identify how his self-interest is best served, he would be all-wise. However, I am not alluding to perfect wisdom but to that level of intelligence any adolescent should possess. Most youngsters know that their self-interest is not advanced by stealing – living off the fruits of the labor of others coercively exacted. They would not regard face-to-face thievery as in their own interest. And there are thousands of high school students who are bright enough to see that there is no distinction between pointing the gun oneself and getting the Federal government to do the "stick-up." The loot would be ill-gained in either case. Self-interest is not served by either method. One need not be overly brilliant to see this.

Yet, what do we find? Millions upon millions identifying self-interest with legal plunder! The more political largess they can get – regardless of the force used – the better. It is not that these people, many of whom are college graduates, could not rise above this infantile level of thinking; they could if they would, but they don't. Further, these millions do not see how their self-interest is subverted rather than served by this socialistic plundering, and they cannot be expected to understand why inflation is not also identified with their self-interest. They see inflation, if they see at all, as the means of filling the thousands of troughs from which they feed without either thought or effort. They love the role of parasites!

Given these millions who thoughtlessly behave this way, plus the political exploiters of nonsense, the situation, on the surface at least, looks hopeless. Stopping inflation appears to be impossible, and certainly this would be the case were it a numbers problem. But, thank heavens, it never has been a numbers problem, is not now, nor will it ever be. It is strictly a matter of inspired and intelligent leadership.

A Natural Aristocracy

Statesmen – in and out of office – are more and more in evidence, persons who think for themselves and stand forthright for their enlightened convictions. These few – thousands, of course – understand that self-interest is to be identified with individuals in the

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role of hosts – producers, not parasites. They also know that inflation is deadly – for parasites cannot exist without hosts. As the troughs empty, attrition increases, especially among the parasites.

As this natural aristocracy – comprised of men of virtue and talents – approaches the pink of condition, rises to the top in thinking how self-interest is best served, the nonsense is stopped dead, then subsides! Your role and mine? Try one's best to be this kind of an exemplary aristocrat. This, I submit, is the sole formula to stop inflation.

IDEAS ON LIBERTY

Fiat Money Inflation in France

OUT OF THE INFLATION of prices grew a speculating class; and, in the complete uncertainty as to the future, all business became a game of chance, and all businessmen, gamblers. In city centers came a quick growth of stockjobbers and speculators; and these set a debasing fashion in business which spread to the remotest parts of the country. Instead of satisfaction with legitimate profits, came a passion for inordinate gains. Then, too, as values became more and more uncertain, there was no longer any motive for care or economy, but every motive for immediate expenditure and present enjoyment. So came upon the nation the *obliteration of thrift.* In this mania for yielding to present enjoyment rather than providing for future comfort were the seeds of new growths of wretchedness: luxury, senseless and extravagant, set in. This, too, spread as a fashion. To feed it, there came cheatery in the nation at large and corruption among officials and persons holding trusts. While men set such fashions in private and official business, women set fashions of extravagance in dress and living that added to the incentives to corruption. . . .

Thus was the history of France logically developed in obedience to natural laws; such has, to a greater or lesser degree, always been the result of irredeemable paper. . . .

ANDREW DICKSON WHITE

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The Right to Be Wrong and the Obligation to Be Right

CHARLES R. LADOW

IT IS DIFFICULT to remember the time when most of us were reached by one newspaper a day, perhaps one radio newscast, and when public opinion polls were infrequently promulgated and analyzed. However, we hardly have to go back thirty years to find the time when such conditions prevailed. In the short intervening period we have come to be battered, on a twenty-four hour schedule, with opinion-making news and punditry including statistically analyzed samples of public opinion, brought up to date by the day.

Man has progressed materially by standardization of parts and functions and it is not too hard to understand the standardization of ideas which has been the product of the mechanization of the mass media. It is likewise possible to see why media-men react to critics of their product much as motor-makers have reacted to Ralph Nader. After all, haven't they simply followed the demands of the market? Should they pay attention to the Hooper ratings and public polls; or let a few high-brow critics bend the policies of their firms?

Being the latest comer to the communication scene, television has been the chief beneficiary of bitter criticism. Its well-noted advantage in courting an audience by picture (even color), as well as sound and words, should not blind critics to similar developments in radio and the press. Licensing policies in the former of these, and the rising costs of entry in either, have led to the development of networks and chains and, in turn, to greater standardization of product in stations and newspapers.

Indeed, the entire publishing business has been totally altered by the exigencies of manufacture and dedication to the mass mar-

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ket in a grossly similar manner. While there are minority book and magazine publishers who cater to scattered intellectual demands, the vast majority of print is devoted to the ephemeral democratic standard: statistically sampled public taste. William James had prescience of this in 1910, when he dreaded the day when America might fall under the spell of "the 10 cent magazine." (That was before inflation!) In quite recent times, the late Joseph Wood Krutch, in a charming essay, entitled *No Essays — Please!*, entertained a more knowledgeable generation by showing how *Time* and *Life* generated copy and, with gentlemanly good humor, what had happened to such once-great magazines as *Atlantic Monthly*.

Wrong at One's Own Risk

It is always tempting to nail down one's points with the crudest and most obvious of examples. It is difficult to nail down this example, because there are no extant public opinion tables for 1492. However, there is strong secondary evidence that the majority of persons in Columbus' day believed the earth to be flat. Columbus differed with that opinion and was ready to risk his life and fortunes on his assumption of the earth's sphericity. According to public opinion, Columbus was wrong. However, the First Amendment of the U. S. Constitution suggests that he had "the right to be wrong" — at least so long as he didn't force anyone to agree with him. If Voltaire really said, "I disapprove of what you say, but will defend to the death your right to say it," those of us acquainted with Voltaire's works will know it was Columbus' form of free speech he so favored rather than the "free speech" often claimed for terrorists and criminals today.

For, in any society worth inhabiting, every right involves responsibility and responsibility means obligation. The right to use the public highways involves the obligation to keep to one's own side of the road, with chaos and death the only alternative. Columbus had the "right to be wrong," according to public opinion; but he had the obligation to prove himself right at his own risk, and of those who voluntarily joined him, without in any way involving those who disagreed and without overturning society.

Columbus' right to free speech only existed so far as he did not use or advocate force in proposing his theory and projected exploration. His obligation to be right was implicit in his duty to protect the lives and property of his fellow mariners and the investment and prestige of the Spanish crown.

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Any other view of such matters would be clearly disruptive of any viable society. Men cannot live together successfully without a good measure of mutual trust and forbearance.

There is certainly no dearth of argument in America today in favor of "free speech." In common parlance, it has become the nearest to an absolute principle, in our Constitution, making the First Amendment even superior in regard to the shibboleth of "equality." We have reached the absurd point where burning down an opposition headquarters can be equated wih free speech and where any means of chicanery or force may be tolerated in gaining or disseminating information or opinion. Innuendo, and even outright falsehood, have equal standing to honestly spoken truth, where, as Hitler once suggested, the biggest lie may be the most palatable public information.

Flouting Social Custom

It seems to be generally overlooked, or forgotten, that absolute freedom of expression has always been in question by the very best minds and that that questionable ideal has never been supported by any society which ever existed. Samuel Johnson said: "Every man has a physical right to think as he pleases; for it cannot be discovered how he thinks. He has not a moral right, for he ought to inform himself, and think justly. But, Sir, no member of a society has a right to *teach* any doctrine contrary to what the society holds to be true . . ." What our society holds to be true has been eroded by permissiveness; but, however, attenuated, sanctions are still inveighed, both legally and morally, against those who break the remaining taboos. Even our widely revered Marxist philosopher, Dr. Marcuse, has made it perfectly clear that, if he had the power, he would shut up the opposition. All radical and "progressive" elements, who most loudly proclaim "Freedom of Speech," are the first to shout down, or attack physically, any vocal opposition. Meanwhile, as we nurse a childish faith in the magic of free expression, the majority of the earth's citizens, including our worst enemies, exist totally without that amenity.

The worldwide and historical lesson which we should be getting is that freedom of speech is no exception to the rule: No right can long survive without its concomitant responsibilities. Milton's *Areopagitica* and our Jeffersonian First Amendment were the products of morally educated men: men who deeply felt the obligation to be right. Like Dr. Johnson,

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they recognized the duty to "inform (themselves), and think justly." To men of such mind and spirit, the *hubris* of an attorney like Kunstler would be unthinkable. Free speech is the fruit of humane civilization. Primitive savagery, however intellectualized, can never create it, or sustain it. Attached to the right of free speech is forever attached the obligation to be right.

True, man is a frail creature, apt to be wrong. Also, to be right is a most difficult feat: one which leads many to the extremes of despair or arrogance. Nevertheless, this obligation is faced by each of us from the first breath of life, which, if not properly taken, leads to suffocation. Each day we make many decisions, like crossing the street, or taking to the woods, wherein lie mortal chances of defeat, dishonor, or destruction. Our security, and that of society and humanity, is dependent on the correctness of decisions. Unlike most living things, man is largely bereft of instincts; so his continued existence is largely based on inherited lore, the funded experience of history. When, in his opinion, a man's obligation to be right is outweighed by his right to be wrong, that man is close to extinction. So it is with a society.

We would not dream of submitting a navigational plan for the astronauts to a public poll for correction. It would not occur to us to send a watch to a plumber for repair, or invite the milkman to remove our appendix. Then, why should we make obeisance to a common denominator in instructing and entertaining the human mind? The human mind is infinitely variable and any cross-section, of taste or capacity, is sure to leave out of concern the vast majority of variables. At any rate, do not the media and press have an obligation to improve public taste and capacities? It seems manifestly one-sided that so many agencies are applying themselves to protect the consumer of food, drugs, or material goods, while scarcely anyone pays responsible attention to the mass consumption of the mind. Gossip, innuendo, and even palpable falsehood are accorded equal representation with the truth.

The exaltation of statistical public opinion is an outgrowth of the dogma of pure democracy. It is part and parcel of the notion that a majority vote is the final answer to any dispute. This not only negates the religious view that "One, with God, is a majority," ignores Jefferson's first draft of the Declaration of Independence which termed men "equal *and independent*," and evades the division of powers and differences of

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education and abilities; but it also invites the absurd assumption that all knowledge is a matter of opinion. Most of our erratic, and often disastrous, behavior as a nation today stems from attempts to impose the dogma of pure democracy upon the constructive forms of our Constitutional Republic. In this, we ignore the clearcut lessons of history, reaching back to ancient Athens and Rome. We have turned Alcuin's remark to Charlemagne that "The voice of the people is the voice of God" into a materialistic parody.

In our halls of government and in the public media, the amount and quality of intellectual "shooting-from-the-hip" is appalling. Because of the inevitably loaded nature of polls, one is fortunately able to believe that the real majority would not, if properly reached, agree with such shenanigans. However, even though, as Lincoln said, ". . . you can't fool all of the people all the time," he also said, ". . . you may fool all the people some of the time; you can even fool some of the people all the time." Since the day of "snake oil" salesman, false advertisers and charlatans have found these latter categories adequate to their purposes. They can, in any event, count on the commonness of a short span of attention and a short memory to save them from the majority. But, they cannot release themselves from the moral obligation to "inform (themselves) and think justly." And, even if bereft of civilized morals, they should be able to obey nature's injunction: "A bird should not befoul its own nest."

Attacks on the Government of the United States, "giving aid and comfort to their enemies," have become commonplace. Deadly attacks are made on the firms and industries, freedom of enterprise, and the sanctity of property and privacy, which have made this nation a haven for the beleaguered everywhere. Such things happen and are accepted blandly, and even supported, by officials sworn to uphold these institutions and by those whose calling is to inform the public of the true state of affairs and uphold propriety of opinion. Beyond this, anyone who points out that such things are happening is labeled a "kook," or "a crazy," or a victim of paranoia. Presumably, only those who are busily dismantling all the mores and institutions of this nation, without even any clearcut alternative, are sane and properly "adjusted" individuals. Well, they had better be right; for, if not, they have clearly exhausted their "right to be wrong" — as far as anyone in our history has done so.

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Freedom/Responsibility

the Quest for Individual Dignity

ROBERT G. BEARCE

So blood flowed in rivers down the gutters of the Place de la Concorde from la Guillotine. Liberte...Egalite...Fraternite...
Ah, but in the end, murder,
drunken mobs with heads on pikes,
lawlessness,
frenzied promiscuity,
anarchy
turned out to be not freedom — but chaos.[1]

BUCHENWALD . . . the Place de la Concorde . . . Auschwitz . . . Siberian labor camps. The mention of such names and places causes indignation from free and civilized men. The tragic irony, however, is that both the guillotine of the French Revolution and the communist labor camp of today were erected ostensibly "for the good of humanity" or the "general good." Robespierre and Marat were willing to sacrifice fellow Frenchmen on the guillotine in order to create a society of "liberty, equality, and fraternity." Hitler would purify the human race by genocide, while the Marxist theoretician liquidates in the name of an ideal, classless society.

Individuals who value their freedom ought to apply some in-depth, radical thought to the causes of tyranny. Simply associating authoritarianism with "evil" and "wicked" dictators is a superficial analysis. We must first comprehend what motivates the twisted idealism; secondly, we should recognize this mentality before it degenerates into the pseudo-righteousness responsible for the modern Buchenwald or communist labor camp.

The cause of regimentation and dictatorships can be traced to one of two outlooks on man's inherent nature. Men are motivated by their fundamental belief as to what governs man's essential character and behavior. Depending upon what they believe in this matter, men create (or impose) their social, political, and economic institutions. These institutions

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[1] Dr. Peter Marshall in *John Doe, Disciple* (McGraw Hill: 1963).

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are correspondingly tyrannical or free.

Victims of Outside Forces

The first viewpoint on human nature assumes that mankind is the victim of outside forces. Supposedly, man is inherently virtuous; he is capable of perfection. He is a creature – righteous at the core – but corrupted by external forces. The cause of his envy, jealousy, and bad behavior, then, is attributed not to the individual but to faulty political, social, and economic structures around him. Correct or abolish these and mankind will evolve into the perfect being he was meant to be.

Many of the philosophical undertones of the French Revolution reflect this belief that man by nature is good – an outlook early propounded by the French philosopher, Rousseau.[2]

The politician or philosopher motivated by this tangent of reasoning demonstrates a vibrant but deceptive humanitarianism. His outlook appears benevolent and righteous. His rhetoric – if not his reasoning – rings with a true compassion for humanity. His views are well received . . . understandably so.

Man has the tendency to overlook his faults, even to excuse and deny them. When individuals are convinced through paternalistic sophistry that they are not responsible for their own welfare . . . their failures . . . their own misdeeds, they willingly accept both false diagnoses and false cures for the world's ills. These cure-alls prescribed by the theoretically-minded are collectivist/statist – tyrannical by their very nature.

Since the individual is supposedly nothing really more than a helpless, innocent victim of adverse conditions, he must only submit to the wiser men who proceed to design and reorder his life for him. The result is inevitable coercion . . . regimentation . . . and tyranny. Writing during the mid-nineteenth century, Frederic Bastiat aptly described the threat to individual freedom and dignity:

> It must be admitted that the tendency of the human race toward liberty is largely thwarted, especially in France. This is greatly due to a fatal desire – learned from the teachings of antiquity that our writers on public affairs have in common: they desire to set themselves above mankind in order to arrange, organize, and regulate it according to their fancy. While society is struggling toward liberty, these famous men who put themselves at its head are filled with the spirit of the seventeenth and eighteenth cen-

[2] *Aspects of the French Revolution* by Alfred Cobban, page 163. (Alfred Cobban: 1968), published by George Braziller, Inc.: New York.

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turies. They think only of subjecting mankind to the philanthropic tyranny of their own social inventions.[3]

Few men, though, like Bastiat detect this deceptive humanitarian mentality which cements the stepping stones toward absolutism. One zealous proponent of the "human-molding" philosophy was considered by some of his contemporaries of being so virtuous that he was called *Incorruptible.* Consider the following sincere confession from this man:

> There exists a deep feeling, tender, compelling, irresistible, the torment and delight of generous hearts, a profound hatred of tyranny, a compassionate concern for the oppressed, a sacred love of one's country, a more sublime and sacred love for humanity, without which a great revolution is no more than a sudden crime that destroys another crime; there exists this selfless ambition to found the first republic in the world; this egoism of men uplifted who find a divine pleasure in the peace of a clear conscience and in the enchanting spectacle of happiness of all. You feel this in that moment which burns in your souls; I feel it in mine.[4]

[3] *The Law* by Frederic Bastiat, pages 51-52. Translated by Dean Russell.

[4] From *Six Summers in Paris* by John Fisher, page 162. (Harper and Row: 1966).

Humanitarian with Guillotine

Maximilien Robespierre, the *Incorruptible,* spoke the above in a speech before the National Convention in July, 1794, at the height of the Reign of Terror under the French Revolution. To be sure, Robespierre decried tyranny, expressed his love for humanity, and cherished a fervent patriotism for France, yet this same virtuous humanitarian represented an authoritarian government that witnessed perhaps as many as 2,800 victims for the guillotine in Paris alone.

Secret police and "vigilance" committees terrorized the French populace — this while Robespierre envisioned a perfected, blissful France and while he experienced that "egoism of men uplifted who find a divine pleasure in the peace of a clear conscience and in the enchanting spectacle of happiness of all!"

Today there are men within relatively free nations who would legislate and eventually enslave for the "good of society." The paradox is that the mentality which clamors most ardently for humanity, "the disadvantaged," and the "common man" is the mentality which ultimately degrades the individual mind, body, and spirit. Rebuking the social reformer of his own day, Frederic Bastiat pleaded for the integrity of the individual:

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Please remember sometimes that this clay, this sand, and this manure which you so arbitrarily dispose of, are men! They are your equals! They are intelligent and free human beings like yourselves! As you have, they too have received from God the faculty to observe, to plan ahead, to think, and to judge for themselves.[5]

Individuals not only have the faculty to think and act for themselves, they have the responsibility to do so. When they abandon that responsibility or when they are deprived of it by paternalism, they eventually learn that "the good of society" is personal enslavement. The extreme visionaries of the French Revolution used the power of the State to bring their notions of "the good of society" into reality – a reality of reigning terror.

Few men having democratic and humanitarian beliefs in our present age feel any kinship with humanitarians in the past who have prepared the ground for authoritarian governments. Parallels, however, exist between events of the French Revolution and the temperament of our own day. Power such as that held by the French Revolutionary regimes is the power presumedly to legislate away social and economic ills via government spending. Such financial muscle in the arm of a paternalistic government deteriorates into deficit spending and inflation.

Planned Chaos

Price-fixing . . . depreciation of the currency . . . food shortages . . . rationing . . . hoarding . . . control of foreign trade – to what period or nation do these economic phenomena apply? Revolutionary France?[6] Twentieth-century America? They apply to that stage of any country's life when government irresponsibility and regimentation destroy the free intercourse of voluntary action.

As the political leaders of Revolutionary France contemplated their self-inflicted problems of food shortages and inflation, they prescribed successively greater doses of coercion in order to save their new society of "liberty, equality, and fraternity." The Law of the Maximum carried with it the penalty of death for those citizens who ignored the divinely inspired features of the legislation.

No such drastic measure as the Law of the Maximum now confronts the individual. Still, his

[5] *The Law*, page 48.

[6] See *Fiat Money Inflation in France* by Andrew Dickson White for an excellent analysis of the economic aspect of the French Revolution. (Foundation For Economic Education: 1965).

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freedom to arrange his economic life as he pleases is deteriorating as various "New Shakes" . . . "New Deals" . . . "New Horizons" . . . "New Frontiers" . . . and "New Promises" gradually pave the way toward a totally regimented society.

Modern Manifestations

The spirit of altruism and humanitarianism that proclaimed freedom, brotherhood, and prosperity during the French Revolution can be felt to a certain degree even today. *Only When A Man Has Freedom From Hunger Can He Hunger For Freedom* could easily have been one of the more sophisticated slogans of the Parisian mobs marching on the Bastille or King Louis' palace at Versailles. That bold declaration, however, was used recently by young people on a cross-country march demonstrating their concern for hunger in present-day America.

Certainly no justice is done equating the demagoguery of French Revolutionary mobs with the simplistic sloganing of modern young folk. However, the assertion *Only When A Man Has Freedom From Hunger Can He Hunger For Freedom* does reflect a hazy, naive idealism—an idealism that fosters the growth of government philanthropy.

Such a slogan reflects a short-sighted humanitarianism that gradually corrupts a nation's temperament, conscience, and institutions. It is this subtle and gradual erosion that individuals in a free society fail to comprehend. They fail to see the correlation between the social reformer's distorted conception of human nature and his political/economic manipulations which lead to tyranny and the guillotine.

Freedom and Responsibility

Only as individuals accept individual freedom and personal accountability for their lives will they withstand the meddling of the social theorist. Man is an accountable, self-determining being. He has within him the potential for self-improvement. Any striving toward perfection, though, should be left to the initiative and energy of the individual . . . not to the work of self-appointed planners.

Only by accepting self-responsibility can the individual learn by his mistakes and shortcomings. He is capable of deliberate, willful misbehavior just as he is capable of striving for all that is just, righteous, and honorable. When the individual begins the road of *self*-betterment he is rewarded with personal confidence and dignity.

Man realizes his potential for integrity when he lives within an

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atmosphere of freedom. If he is deprived of the right to make choices . . . of ordering his life as he pleases within the confines of other men's rights...he is robbed of his chances for achieving individual dignity. W. A. Paton has wisely observed in this respect that "every man deserves the precious opportunity to assume responsibility for his own course, whether he is swimming courageously upstream or paddling lazily, with plenty of company, in the other direction."[7]

This is the tolerance required of the individual if he is to be free. This freedom, though, carries with it an aspect of risk. When freedom and responsibility are rejected by too many individuals, those paddling downstream become a massive onslaught, not only obstructing the few courageous upstreamers, but actually forcing the upstreamers downstream amid the onslaught. The anarchy, human degradation, and eventual tyranny of the French Revolution will then be repeated.

[7] Paton, W. A., "Let's First Mend Tommy's Trousers," *Essays on Liberty*, Foundation for Economic Education, 12:426-427, 1965.

IDEAS ON LIBERTY

Intelligence and Character

THE PATTERN of a man's life is determined by his intelligence, and by the motives, impulses and disciplines which, taken together, we call character. Both intelligence and character are educable. The difference between educated and uneducated character is as great as between educated and uneducated intelligence.

A person may be highly educated in intelligence and yet be controlled by gross motives and impulses. For an educational program to concern itself solely or chiefly with training the intelligence will result in distorted and inadequate personality.

Knowledge is powerless by itself. Unless driven by motive it is inert. It is the part of intelligence to inform and guide motives, incentive, and conviction, while it is the function of these qualities, to which we give the name character, to give life and power to intelligence. Only in the union and mutual development of intelligence and character can the possibilities of life be realized.

ARTHUR E. MORGAN, *Antioch Review*, March 15, 1945

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The Cry for Freedom Is the Scream of Nature

THOMAS FREDERICK O'CONNELL

FROM HELPLESSNESS in infancy, man works toward intellectual fulfillment and personal freedom, finds himself confused as he pursues his dreams, and in his emotional confusion he questions his own reasoning capacity, his will, and even life itself. Going full cycle, he arrives at an adult stage when he feels as powerless as an infant.

Seeking truth, man finds falsehood. Seeking goodness he finds evil. Seeking beauty he finds ugliness. Seeking contentment he finds frustration. Seeking peace he finds war. Seeking love he finds hate. Seeking friends he finds enemies. Expecting the best he finds the worst. Yet when he expects the worst he frequently comes face to face with the best. In search of answers he finds only additional questions.

The man in search of himself wants more than merely to be conceived, born, live, and die. He does not live for survival alone. The bare essentials of life do not fulfill his restless spirit. He wants more. In his passion for more he finds that when he gets what he wants it fails to satisfy him. When he relieves himself of a worry, he immediately finds a new one to dwell on; and when he achieves a goal, he soon replaces it with another. Man is not even content with contentment. It bores him. This restless striving not only accompanies our nature, it reflects

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the essence of our nature, and is tied in with the will to live.

When our foot moves toward the ant he scurries to escape the shadow that signals his extinction. So too with man, and more so. Man not only reacts to specific threats of death; he even fears death when it does not directly threaten him. We possess the-urge-to-live in the highest degree, and yet we also have within us a potential for self-destruction which is not evident in lower creatures. Rather than just live and die we play at living and gamble with dying.

The Options Available, Including Suicide

We sometimes forget the extent of our freedom. We may choose to live or choose to die or accept a living death. We are free in spite of limitations placed on us by government or business or other external sources. Even a slave is free to think individual thoughts, and even a slave is free to choose whether or not he wishes to continue to live in his subservient condition. Suicide may seem like no choice at all for most of us, but when life seems intolerable some men do exercise their ultimate alternative and terminate their own existences. Suicide is an extreme but valid example of free will, but a more widespread example is the urge to live. Because most of us treasure life with all its difficulties, we feel that men who lose hope and commit suicide are demented. We would rather choose life with all its contradictions than choose the other alternative.

The urge to live implies freedom on the natural level. Our belief in the necessity of freedom is exemplified in a negative way in our treatment of criminals. We relieve criminals of their freedom. We fear imprisonment because we fear the explicit loss of our freedom, but our less obvious contact with freedom can lead us into slavery if we take it too much for granted. If we allow government to chip away at our freedom we may experience a rude future awakening which brings home the shocking reality that what we believed was a massive iceberg of freedom has been reduced to the size of an ice cube in a cocktail glass. The maintenance of freedom demands constant vigilance. The man who forgets that he is free soon finds himself a slave. Freedom is one of those ideals that we never achieve fully, yet if we only come close it is worth the effort.

Anomalies of Freedom

In our desire to find freedom we often lose it. The man who goes into business for himself in order

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to be free soon learns that clients can be as tyrannical as bosses. The man who wants the freedom of leading rather than following soon learns that leaders are in many ways as servile as their followers. The quest for freedom usually ends in compromise. We are apt to confuse the appearance of freedom with the actuality of it because freedom is as much a state of mind as it is a state of actual existence. Does a man exercise his freedom by wearing long hair and avoiding baths? To equate freedom with externals such as hair and clothing is as much a mistake for the rebel as it is for the middle class citizen. Both fall into the category of conformists.

The free man is frustrated by both middle class conformity and rebel conformity. He does not look to the group for his freedom; he looks within himself. The man who values his individual freedom knows that the group protesting in the name of personal freedom is apt to indulge itself in new forms of group tyranny if it achieves any measure of power. Given enough power, a crusading group will switch from a cry for freedom to a demand for conformity. The free man does not lightly surrender his personal freedom to any group because he knows that groups are simply gatherings of rational-emotional humans like himself, with potential for both good and evil.

Leaders Tend to Extremes

The leaders of any emotional movement or crusade are usually extremists by nature. They tend to be slaves to their own fixations and their aim in life is not so much to live freely according to the highest dictates of their own natures, but to inflict their confused ideas of righteousness on other men. We should be wary of the loud man who promises us freedom. His idea of freedom may resemble our idea of slavery.

Freedom involves conscience, and conscience is strictly an individual matter. "Conscience is the soul of freedom," said Thomas Merton, "its eyes, its energy, its life. Without conscience, freedom never knows what to do with itself. And a rational being who does not know what to do with himself finds the tedium of life unbearable. He is literally bored to death." The man who disregards conscience in his search for freedom will also disregard it when he attains his goal. His so-called freedom will become licentiousness aimed at appeasing and easing his own boredom. An extremist who achieves his goal does not suddenly stop being an extremist; he simply substitutes one set of am-

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bitions for another. Extremists are not as interested in freedom as they are in power. Their prime motivating force is personal ambition at the expense of their followers. The extremist in search of power usually claims that there are simple answers for complex problems. In so doing he displays his basic ignorance of the contradictory nature of humanity. There are no simple answers to complex life problems.

Seeds of Prejudice

The civil rights movement is impaled on the horns of a dilemma. The minority which tries to mix itself into the so-called melting pot of society spawns prejudice, and the minority which insists on separatism triggers prejudice. Minority man is compromised by his own minority status. In his search for freedom he threatens larger minorities who are still insecure, and in his bid for advancement he lays himself open to backlash prejudice rising out of the irrational fears of ignorant men. If minority man utilizes violence as a tool to draw attention to his problems, he not only draws attention, he sparks repression. When carried to extremes, violent protest is inevitably self-destructive.

Respect for oneself and for one's fellow man are not likely to be achieved through violent disregard for the lives and rights of others. The violent protester thrashes out at what he considers to be his enemy, but his enemy is not a specific group of men; it is human nature itself. Minority man's desire for freedom conflicts with majority man's urge to be superior. Minority man himself, once he attains a higher status, will perversely ignore the rights of the next group of underdogs. The plight of minorities in states governed by majorities is a frustrating one, but the transition from slavery to toleration to brotherhood has never been easy. It has always been a battle fought on the battlefield of contradiction and paradox. The restless urge to improve one's lot is as normal as the urge to live, but in a disorderly world where truth is true only sometimes and men are as emotional as they are rational, high expectations tend to breed intense aggravations.

Man Must Seek Freedom

Minority man's outcry for freedom is not a question with no answer. The cry for freedom is the scream of nature, and a minority man's most tragic contradiction would be to stifle the shouting of his soul. He *must* seek freedom, but freedom is so contradictory that when it seems to be at hand it will slip away, and when it

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seems to be slipping away it will be at hand. The elusive ideal that we call freedom is similar to the ideal of happiness and contentment. The achievement of one kind of freedom usually brings with it a new kind of slavery. For every gain, we must accept some kind of loss. In the ranks of persecuted men, there often exists a freedom to laugh for the sake of laughing, sing for the sake of singing, and love for the sake of loving. Such freedom strangely diminishes when persecution ceases. In the ranks of free appearing men, who seem on the surface to be achieving the better things of life, there often exists a lack of humor and spontaneity. In his pursuit of culture the free man has a tendency to make himself a slave to group opinions. Under a free exterior we can find a slave mentality, and under a servile exterior we can find mental freedom. The ideal combination would be a blend of internal and external freedom.

The key to freedom is the word "voluntary." The man who is free is tuned in to the wave length of his own nature. He operates according to his conscience, and although he respects his fellow man, he does not ask other men to resolve his dilemmas. His own solutions may create more dilemmas ad infinitum, but it is better to have one's own choices backfire than to be misled by other men. The important thing is not to relinquish the freedom to make personal choices. Men who make their own choices seldom lack self-respect. The man who respects himself and believes in the need for personal freedom has no undue fear of other men attempting to reach his level of humanity. Even though he is aware of the contradictions of freedom, he respects the desire of other men to be free . . . even if their newfound freedom makes slaves out of them.

Free or Equal

The desire to be free is sometimes confused with the desire to be equal. Spinoza said, "He who seeks equality between unequals seeks an absurdity." Such a remark need not be classified as cynical. If we treasure our individuality we should be prepared to accept our inequality. Voltaire, in attempting to arrive at an appropriate notion of equality, said, "Those who say that all men are equal speak the greatest truth if they mean that all men have an equal right to liberty, to the possession of their goods, and to the protection of the laws." Voltaire considered equality "natural when it is limited to rights, unnatural when it attempts to level goods and powers." The liberty that Voltaire referred to is the freedom to

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live according to one's nature as long as the rights of others are respected. Voltaire was enough of a realist to see that an attempt for total equality would be an impossible and inhuman ideal.

We will never achieve equality among men because we are a collection of human individuals who vary greatly from one another and will continue to do so. We are hard put to find our own rational or emotional twin because each of us has a distinct nature distinguishable from that of any other human on this planet. To cheer for individual liberty and freedom and then demand equality is a gross contradiction. In our world we find similarities and likenesses but we do not find total identities and total equalities. Our notion of equality is similar to our notion of perfection. It is a notion and nothing more. To equate people or things with one another is a contradictory pursuit. Since we cannot actually *be* one another, we must be content to recognize our differences and respect them rather than attempt to subdue them. The essence of our individual humanity lies in our differences.

Inequalities Abound

Life is filled with inequalities. From youth we are aware that our own particular body has a certain size and a limited strength. We are aware of our own rational and emotional characteristics and how they differ from the attributes of others. The wise man accepts his strengths and weaknesses and tries to live accordingly. Only the fool claims that he is equal to all other men, and the man who makes such a ridiculous claim is bound to end up destroying himself because he is trying to apply absolute standards to a relative world. To achieve total equality with another man is to actually become that man, but the fact of our individuality precludes total identity with others. Our individuality not only begets inequality, it demands it.

If we have confused the idea of equality with the notion of freedom it is time for us to clarify our thoughts. The ideal of equality breeds frustration among those who recognize the many inequalities which exist in the society of mankind. The unequal man who demands equality will always have his demands ignored by other imperfect, unequal men. To strive for relative freedom makes sense, but to talk of equality as if it could actually occur is a waste of words. Demands for perfection only result in rejection.

The free man is not concerned with equality. In his conscientious pursuit of what is good and proper

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for his own nature he operates as an individual. Men who think in terms of equality also think in terms of conformity. When we use the word "equality" we should stress the spiritual idealism built into the word and forget the emphasis on materialistic equality. Equality and freedom on a spiritual level are natural to man, but the goal of materialistic equality is more apt to lead to slavery than to individual freedom.

Self-Respect and Self-Reliance

When a man desires only to live according to the highest dictates of his nature, he is demonstrating his belief that he is a free human being. When others would arbitrarily deny him of his right to live his own way, they tread on his natural rights. The gravest error minority man can make is to submit to the whims and fancies of the oppressive majority. Submission lends credence to the majority's belief in its own righteousness, and is likely to lead to subjugation. Men who believe in personal freedom must stubbornly persist in their search for individual freedom, because if they give up the fight they will have to surrender a large portion of their souls. The soul, once shattered, is difficult to piece together again. Along with the shattering of a soul goes a loss of self-respect, and self-respect is the prime requisite for the man who would desire to become free.

One of the major problems of many civil rights movements is that individual pride among members of oppressed groups has shrunk to such a minimal size that it requires much time and effort to re-establish it. Another problem is that civil rights leaders do not necessarily reflect the desires of their own people when they demand unobtainable ideals. To aim for the unattainable perfection and expect to get it is naive. On the other hand, to demand the impossible in order to achieve the possible may be monumentally shrewd. Most leaders are not monumentally shrewd. They are simply men like the rest of us with more push than the rest of us. When we listen to the vocal outpourings of self-appointed leaders we must always remain aware that if the truth is only true sometimes, it is true even less often when it emanates from the mouths of men in power positions. Men in both minority and majority power positions are often more concerned with power than with truth.

If we cannot rely on men in power, on whom can we rely? Ultimately we must rely on ourselves. Whether we talk of freedom or morality or political arrangements or education or the

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problems of our heavily populated world we must always come back to ourselves. We are individual humans who think, and in our thinking capacity lies our salvation. It is only when we stop thinking for ourselves that we truly lose our freedom. We should not try to think for one another. We should only encourage one another to be free in our thinking and living. To live we need no great abundance of material items. We could do without our cars and our television sets and our appliances if we were to adopt a different set of spiritual and human values. But we do need food, clothing, shelter, and hopefully some love. Freedom is not to be found in the amassing of material possessions. It is not to be found in the reduction of man to a number or an average or a statistic. Nor is to be found when man considers himself no more than a tool in the industrial process. It is found in self-respect and respect for others.

Hope for the Future

If there is to be a future society in which we will be able to retain our individual freedom to live according to our natures, and in which we will be able to experience lives fit for humans, it will not be in a society which substitutes group opinions for divine ideals. Although spiritual ideals seem to be out of fashion in our times, it is far more human to live in a contradictory pursuit of what seems impossible than to settle for the meaningless attainment of the possible. Materialistic values change with each new fad. When man's pursuit of personal pleasure replaces his pursuit of eternity he parts with his own self-respect and becomes the slave of other men. We need not fear economic enslavement or political enslavement as much as enslavement of the mind. We must resist the lure of the myths of security and equality. We must preserve our own individuality and assist others to do likewise. It is not an easy task, this preservation of the individual personality, but it is up to each and every one of us to chart his own course through the maze we call life. We have no need to be equal with one another, but we do need to be free in our thoughts and actions. The man who swaps his freedom for conformist security is a loser. The pain and discomfort which accompany freedom are nothing compared to the torture which follows the selling of one's soul. When a man gives up his individual soul he becomes nothing; and there is no pain more severe than the awareness that one has voluntarily become a cipher.

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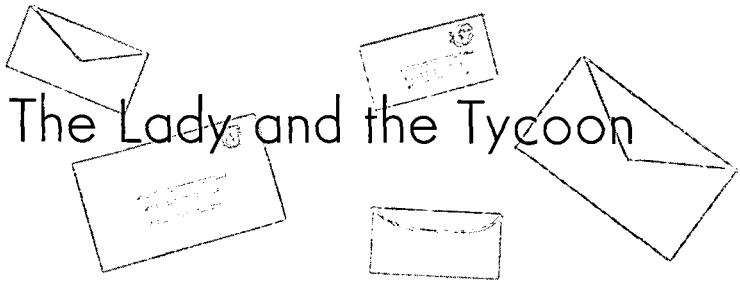

The Lady and the Tycoon

NO SINGLE person starts a movement. In the late Nineteen Thirties, when the so-called intellectuals were moving in droves to the Left, there were still a few straggling advocates of what Leonard Read speaks of as the "freedom philosophy." The stragglers, however, weren't very clear about fundamentals.

To indulge in some personal reminiscence, I was impressed with Albert Jay Nock's *Our Enemy, The State* but troubled by Nock's Single Tax panacea, which would have made the State our universal landlord. The anti-Communists — Eugene Lyons, Ben Stolberg and others in the group that asked for asylum for Leon Trotsky on a purely civil libertarian basis — were fighting an obvious enemy, but they didn't have any positive theory of individual freedom. Out on the West Coast Leonard Read was reading Bastiat and organizing something called Pamphleteers, Inc., but he was practically unknown on the Eastern seaboard.

It was a strange, confusing time. The New Deal had flopped; if unemployment was coming to an end it was because war industries were starting up. As Randolph Bourne had put it, war was "the health of the State," proving the futility of expecting government to run a peace-time economy.

I don't know how it was with others, but it took two books by women, each published in 1943, to put my own groping thoughts about the inequity of government enterprise into focus. The first book was Isabel Paterson's *The God of the Machine;* the second was Rose Wilder Lane's *The Discovery of Freedom.* In their different ways Mrs. Paterson and Mrs. Lane analyzed the relations between individual rights and the

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release of energy. Tracing the "long circuit of energy" from its origins in free individual choice to its institutional embodiment in voluntary assocations of one sort or another, the two women arrived at an identical conclusion: only under a Madisonian checks-and-balances system, with government limited to defense, police power and courts-of-justice functions, could humanity thrive.

The odd thing about it was that the two women were not friends; Isabel Paterson could not forgive Rose Wilder Lane for having been a socialist in the days when Jack London was helping to organize the Intercollegiate Socialist Society. This was Isabel's mistake: she could not see that some people have to learn from experience, as Mrs. Lane learned when she observed, from close up, what Fabianism and its harsher brother, Leninist Bolshevism, had done to stop the flow of energy in Europe and countries of the East. Significantly, both Mrs. Paterson and Mrs. Lane had grown up on the American frontier, where freedom was most uninhibited. They should have been friends.

Working from Principle

When Rose Wilder Lane really latched on to a principle, she lived it. Although she insisted that she never did things out of a desire to be of "service" (she hated professional Do-Gooders because they usually worked with extorted "other people's money"), she could be a twelve-hour-a-day letter writer in behalf of spreading her philosophy. In the Thirties she gave up writing her best-selling fiction because she objected to paying income taxes to finance compulsory social security and the various bureaucracies of the Rooseveltian Welfare State. Her torrential energies were spent on raising her own food on a few acres outside of Danbury, Connecticut (she refused to have anything to do with ration cards during the war), and on defending and amplifying the "freedom philosophy" in her correspondence with numerous people.

There must be hundreds of Rose Wilder Lane letters in various files. Roger Lea MacBride has limited his selection for *The Lady and the Tycoon* (Caxton Printers, $5.95) to the "best of letters between Rose Wilder Lane and Jasper Crane." There are 387 pages of these, which is surely enough to present an entirely representative sample of Mrs. Lane's thinking over a quarter of a century.

Jasper Crane, the "tycoon" to whom Mrs. Lane addressed her thoughts about freedom, had mapped out a "freedom philosophy"

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for himself partly by long and arduous thinking about his experience in industry (he was a Du Pont Company executive) and partly by his reading, which extended from Biblical studies to the papers of James Madison. He was a most understanding correspondent whose short commendations and ripostes brought out the most able sort of exposition from Mrs. Lane. The fact that he happened to be a tycoon (meaning a monied industrialist) meant little to Mrs. Lane, who didn't think movements thrived on money. The Fabians and early socialists had worked best when lean and hungry. She liked Jasper Crane because he was an activist who agreed with her that all too many Big Businessmen had no sense of the philosophical underpinnings of their own originally free system.

Organizational Activity

Rose Wilder Lane had no belief in organizations as such; she felt in her bones that the end of the Twentieth Century would see a great renascence of individualist thinking simply because dedicated young people had begun to see through the pretensions of the Welfare State. She was not, however, wholly consistent in her attitude toward organizations. Many of her letters to Jasper Crane were devoted to thinking about ways and means of making the Mont Pelerin Society more effective, which meant that she approved of its founding in the first place.

Reading this selection from the Lane-Crane correspondence, one gets a very real sense of how the opposition to State interventionism of all sorts has grown from practically nothing in 1943 to become a most impressive movement in the early Nineteen Seventies. Where once there were two women writing books, a handful of Vienna school economists (Von Mises and his followers) teaching in odd corners of our educational system, and a Leonard Read with the idea of the Foundation for Economic Education at the back of his head, there are now a score of freedom publications (*The Freeman, Human Events, National Review, New Guard, The Alternative, Modern Age,* et cetera), a plethora of "conservative" (meaning old-fashioned liberal) newspaper columnists, good schools (Hillsdale and Rockford College, to name a couple), flourishing societies (Mont Pelerin, the Philadelphia Society), foundations (FEE itself, the Institute for Humane Studies, et cetera) and a scattered but effective base in the older university world (the Hoover Institution at Stanford, for example).

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The Eternal Optimist

Rose Wilder Lane, the eternal optimist, kept pointing out the growth of understanding about liberty to Jasper Crane, who was inclined on occasion to lament the difficulties encountered by libertarians. Speaking of my own *The Roots of Capitalism,* Mr. Crane told Rose Lane that I did it "with quite inadequate monetary reward." I earned enough from it to finance the period engaged in its researching and writing, which means that I got an education for free from doing it, a quite adequate compensation. My only wish is that someone would keep the book in print without worrying about paying royalties until the cost of a new edition had been entirely absorbed.

No mystic, Mrs. Lane felt that moral law existed in the grain of God's universe on the same plane as the "natural" laws of physics, chemistry and astronomy. As she saw it, one gets one's comeuppance for murder or theft even as one is hurt if he or she steps out of a second-story window. By the same token societies get their comeuppance when they depart from the "natural" laws that govern the release of human energy. Everything in Rose Wilder Lane's world moved toward consistency, which is what makes her letters a most treasured experience to read.

▸ THE POLITICAL ILLUSION by Jacques Ellul (New York: Vintage Books, 1972, 258 pp. $1.95)

Reviewed by Haven Bradford Gow

THIS is not a witty or eloquent work, but it certainly is a book which contains much wisdom. The author, Jacques Ellul, is an eminent French social philosopher, currently professor of law and history at the University of Bordeaux. He is the author of a number of seminal works, among which are *The Technological Society* and *False Presence of the Kingdom.*

The Technological Society, the author's best-known work, is an examination of the technical view of life – modern man's obsession with means, with techniques, especially in the political order. This preoccupation with techniques in the political sphere is alarming, warns Ellul, for then moral and even personal considerations are shunted aside; and such values as freedom and justice are subordinated to the value of "efficiency."

False Presence of the Kingdom is an angry discussion of the politicization of the Church. It is not the function of the Church to formulate grandiose social, economic and political programs to achieve The Great Society, Ellul declares, but increasing numbers of church leaders have come to believe that "politics constitutes a

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sort of ultimate issue." For them, "Politics becomes a test of the sincerity of one's faith. The political order takes on such importance that all teaching seems to converge on this entrance into politics . . . The political issue becomes ultimate to such an extent that persons and churches are judged in terms of political criteria."

Like the previous work, *The Political Illusion* concerns the relation of the religious to the social and political orders. But more than that, it deals with contemporary man's idolization of politics, and his conversion of all questions into political questions. "It is no longer true," Ellul tells us, "that the better part of all questions facing a society is not political. And even if a question is in no way political, it becomes political and looks to the state for an answer. It is wrong to say that politics is everything, but it is a fact that in our society everything has become political. . . ."

The evidences of our political obsession are everywhere around us, contends Ellul, and we only have to reflect upon our common experience to know that this is so. For example, there is an increasing tendency to view events and persons exclusively in terms of politics; to place everything in the hands of the state; to appeal to the state in all circumstances; to subordinate the dilemmas of the individual to those of the group; to believe that everyone is qualified to deal with political affairs. All these, the author tells us, reveal modern man's obsession with politics and the widespread acceptance of "the political illusion."

There are three aspects to this illusion. The first concerns control of the state. The author observes that, despite what those living in a democracy have been led to believe, "the people" do not really control the state by their ballots. While "the people" control to a certain extent who is on top of the pyramid, they do not in fact control the state, for their elected representatives cannot effectively deal with the behemoth under them. Even when the leaders at the top are changed, there is little chance for reform, since the leaders are slaves to political pressure groups, the bureaucracy, and the technical experts they employ.

The second aspect concerns popular participation and the notion that, though they do not control the state, "the people" nevertheless participate substantially in its doings. This is just another illusion, says Ellul, for even as their ballots cannot control the course of events, the organizations of "the people" – for example, parties and trade unions – do not channel

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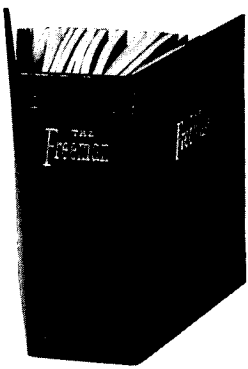
popular desires so as to make them effective. Why? Because these organizations demand men at the top who are professional politicians whose main and probably only concern is to attain and conserve power against rivals in their own and in other camps.

The final aspect involves the belief that ultimately all problems are reducible to the political order, and therefore demand purely political "solutions." This doctrine, contends the author, has contributed to the growth of the state, its powers of organization, and its responsibilities. Not only is governmental action being applied in increasing numbers of realms, but the means through which the state can act are growing too. All this seems to go hand in hand with inevitable centralization and with the total organization of society in the hands of the state.

The perennial problems of the human condition are, at bottom, moral and religious; the crisis we face in the West is of the spirit, and it is a crisis which for better or worse is beyond the competence of politics to deal with. It is our good fortune to have the likes of Jacques Ellul around to remind us that when we disregard that truth, when we mistakenly assume that political remedies can resolve what really are disorders of the spirit demanding religious solutions, the tragic and inevitable result is not heaven-on-earth, but rather hell.



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